

IMMUNOGENIC COMPOSITIONS CONTAINING PHOSPHOLIPID

Statement of Related Applications

[0001] This application claims the benefit of priority to U.S. provisional patent application number 60/436,919 filed December 27, 2002 incorporated in its entirety herein by reference. This application also claims the benefit of priority to U.S. provisional patent application number 60/513,075 filed October 21, 2003 incorporated in its entirety herein by reference.

Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates generally to pharmaceutical compositions. In particular, the invention relates to immunogenic compositions comprising phospholipid adjuvants.

Background

[0003] The emergence of subunit vaccines created by recombinant DNA technology has intensified the need for safe and effective adjuvant-containing compositions. Subunit vaccines, while offering significant advantages over traditional live and killed vaccines in terms of safety and cost of production, generally present isolated polypeptides or mixtures of isolated polypeptides to the immune system, which have limited immunogenicity as compared to, for example, whole viruses, bacteria and so forth. As a result, these vaccines generally benefit from adjuvants with significant immunostimulatory capabilities, which help them to reach their full potential in treating disease.

[0004] Traditional live vaccines, on the other hand, commonly do not require adjuvants. Moreover, killed vaccines are generally more immunogenic than subunit vaccines and commonly do not require adjuvants. Nonetheless, these vaccines, like subunit vaccines, can also benefit from adjuvants having significant immunostimulatory capabilities.



Summary of the Invention

[0005] The present invention relates to immunogenic compositions comprising adjuvants having significant immunostimulatory capabilities, and in particular, compositions comprising phospholipid adjuvants.

[0006] According to a first aspect of the invention, an immunogenic composition is provided which comprises: (a) a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient; (b) a polymer microparticle comprising a biodegradable polymer, for example, a polymer selected from a poly(α -hydroxy acid), a polyhydroxy butyric acid, a polycaprolactone, a polyorthoester, a polyanhydride, and a polycyanoacrylate; (c) an antigen adsorbed to the microparticle; and (d) a phospholipid compound, for example, a synthetic phospholipid compound comprising: (i) one or more phosphoryl groups (wherein a phosphoryl group is represented by the radical $\text{P}=\text{O}$), typically independently selected from a phosphato

group, —O—P(=O)(OH)_2 and a phosphodiester group —O—P(=O)(OH)—O— , and (ii) a plurality (typically, three to ten, more typically four to eight, even more typically six) of

linear alkane groups, $\text{—[CH}_2\text{]}_n\text{CH}_3$, in which n is independently an integer ranging from 6 to 20, i.e., 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 or 20, including pharmaceutically acceptable salts where appropriate.

[0007] In many embodiments, the microparticles are formed from a poly(α -hydroxy acid), such as a poly(lactide) ("PLA"), a copolymer of lactide and glycolide, such as a poly(D,L-lactide-co-glycolide) ("PLG"), or a copolymer of D,L-lactide and caprolactone. Poly(D,L-lactide-co-glycolide) polymers include those having a lactide/glycolide molar ratio ranging, for example, from 20:80 to 80:20, 25:75 to 75:25, 40:60 to 60:40, or 55:45 to 45:55, and having a molecular weight ranging, for example, from 5,000 to 200,00 Daltons, 10,000 to 100,000 Daltons, 20,000 to 70,000 Daltons, or 40,000 to 50,000 Daltons.

[0008] Antigen, phospholipid and various optional supplementary components may independently be, for example: (a) adsorbed to the surface of the microparticles, (b) entrapped within the microparticles, (c) in solution, (d) adsorbed to separate populations of microparticles, and/or (e) entrapped within separate populations of microparticles.

[0009] According to a second aspect of the invention, an immunogenic composition is provided which comprises: (a) water; (b) a metabolizable oil; (c) an emulsifying agent; (d) an antigen; and (e) a phospholipid compound such as those described above, wherein the composition is an oil-in-water emulsion having oil and aqueous phases, and wherein the oil phase(s) is in the form of oil droplets, substantially all of which are less than 1 micron in diameter.

[0010] The antigen, phospholipid molecule and various supplementary components may independently be, for example: dissolved or dispersed within the oil phase(s) of the emulsion (including separate populations of oil droplets), dissolved or dispersed within the aqueous phase of the emulsion and/or disposed at the interfaces between aqueous and oil phases of the emulsion.

[0011] The metabolizable oil is typically selected from animal oils (including fish oils) and vegetable oils, more typically an unsaturated hydrocarbon having from 20-40 carbons, more typically, branched, polyunsaturated hydrocarbon having from 20-40 carbon atoms, for example, terpenoids such as squalene.

[0012] The emulsifying agent typically comprises at least one non-ionic surfactant, more typically fatty acid esters and/or fatty acid esters comprising a polyoxyethylene moiety, for example, sorbitan derivatives such as sorbitan fatty acid monoesters, sorbitan fatty acid sesquiesters, sorbitan fatty acid triesters, polyoxyethylene sorbitan fatty acid monoesters and polyoxyethylene sorbitan fatty acid triesters. In a more specific example, the emulsifying agent comprises polyoxyethylene sorbitan monooleate and sorbitan trioleate. Where the emulsifying agent includes two or more surfactants, one surfactant can have, for example, an HLB value ranging from 1 to 9, while the other surfactant can have an HLB value ranging from 10 to 20.

[0013] Supplementary components can be included within the various compositions of the present invention, including pharmaceuticals, hormones, enzymes, transcription or translation mediators, metabolic pathway intermediates, immunomodulators, additional immunological adjuvants, and combinations thereof.

[0014] Antigens can be, for instance, polypeptide containing antigens or polynucleotide containing antigens. Examples of polynucleotide-containing antigens include, for example, (a) nucleic acid sequences that directly encode a polypeptide-containing antigens (e.g., an mRNA molecule) and (b) vector constructs that indirectly

encode polypeptide-containing antigens, for example, vector constructs that express heterologous nucleic acid sequences, which in turn encode polypeptide-containing antigens (e.g., DNA vector constructs and RNA vector constructs).

[0015] Polypeptide-containing antigens can be, for example, tumor antigens and antigens from pathogenic organisms, such as viruses, bacteria, fungi and parasites. Thus, in some embodiments, the polypeptide-containing antigen is derived from a virus such as, for example, hepatitis A virus (HAV), hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), herpes simplex virus (HSV), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), cytomegalovirus (CMV), influenza virus (e.g., influenza A virus), and rabies virus. In other embodiments, the polypeptide-containing antigen is derived from a bacterium such as, for example, cholera, diphtheria, tetanus, streptococcus (e.g., streptococcus A and B), pertussis, *Neisseria meningitidis* (e.g., meningitis A, B, C, W, Y), *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, *Helicobacter pylori*, and *Haemophilus influenza* (e.g., *Haemophilus influenza* type B). In still other embodiments, the polypeptide-containing antigen is derived from a parasite such as, for example, a malaria parasite.

[0016] Other embodiments of the invention are directed to methods of delivering antigens to a host animal, which comprises administering to the host animal any of the immunogenic compositions described herein. The host animal is preferably a vertebrate animal, more preferably a mammal, and even more preferably a human.

[0017] The present invention is also directed to methods of stimulating a humoral immune response and/or a cellular immune response, including a Th1 immune response, or a CTL response, or lymphoproliferation, or cytokine production, within a host animal in a host animal, comprising administering to the animal any of the immunogenic compositions described herein in an amount effective to induce the humoral and/or cellular immune response.

[0018] In other embodiments, the invention is directed to methods of immunization, which comprise administering to a host animal a therapeutically effective amount of any of the immunogenic compositions described herein.

[0019] The present invention is further directed to methods of immunizing a host animal, e.g., against a tumor or a viral, bacterial, or parasitic infection, comprising administering to the animal any of the immunogenic compositions described herein in an amount effective to induce a protective response.

[0020] Delivery of the immunogenic compositions of the invention may be performed by any known method, including direct injection (e.g., subcutaneously, intraperitoneally, intravenously or intramuscularly).

[0021] Hence, according to some embodiments of the present invention, compositions and methods are provided which treat, including prophylactically and/or therapeutically immunize, a host animal, e.g., against viral, fungal, mycoplasma, bacterial, or protozoan infections, as well as against tumors. The methods of the present invention are useful for conferring prophylactic and/or therapeutic immunity to a host animal, preferably a human. The methods of the present invention can also be practiced on animals other than humans, including biomedical research applications.

[0022] Other embodiments of the present invention are directed to methods for producing the above compositions. For example, the above polymer microparticles can be produced by a method that comprises: (a) forming a water-in-oil-in-water emulsion comprising water, organic solvent, biodegradable polymer, and anionic, cationic, nonionic or zwitterionic surfactant; and (b) removing the organic solvent from the emulsion, to form the polymer microparticles.

[0023] As another example, the above emulsions can be produced by a method that comprises: (a) providing a mixture comprising: organic solvent, water, metabolizable oil, and emulsifying agent; and (b) subjecting this mixture to sufficient shear stresses to produce an oil-in-water emulsion in which the oil phase(s) is in the form of oil droplets, substantially all of which are less than 1 micron in diameter.

[0024] One particular advantage of the immunogenic compositions of the present invention is the ability to generate immune responses in a vertebrate subject. In addition to a conventional antibody response, the compositions herein described can provide for, e.g., the association of the expressed antigens with class I MHC molecules such that an *in vivo* cellular immune response to the antigen of interest can be mounted, which stimulates the production of cytolytic T-cells ("CTLs") to allow for future recognition of the antigen. Furthermore, an antigen-specific response by helper T-cells may be elicited. Accordingly, the methods of the present invention will find use in eliciting cellular and/or humoral immune responses to a variety of antigens. As a specific example, antigens derived from viral pathogens can induce antibodies, T-cell helper epitopes and T-cell

cytotoxic epitopes. Such antigens include those encoded by human and animal viruses and can correspond to either structural or non-structural proteins.

[0025] These and other embodiments, aspects and advantages of the present invention will become readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art in view of the disclosure herein.

Detailed Description of the Invention

[0026] The practice of the present invention will employ, unless otherwise indicated, conventional methods of chemistry, polymer chemistry, biochemistry, molecular biology, immunology and pharmacology, within the skill of the art. Such techniques are explained fully in the literature. See, e.g., *Remington's Pharmaceutical Sciences*, 18th Edition (Easton, Pennsylvania: Mack Publishing Company, 1990); *Methods In Enzymology* (S. Colowick and N. Kaplan, eds., Academic Press, Inc.); *Handbook of Experimental Immunology*, Vols. I-IV (D.M. Weir and C.C. Blackwell, eds., 1986, Blackwell Scientific Publications); Sambrook, et al., *Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual* (2nd Edition, 1989); *Handbook of Surface and Colloidal Chemistry* (Birdi, K.S., ed, CRC Press, 1997) and *Seymour/Carraher's Polymer Chemistry* (4th edition, Marcel Dekker Inc., 1996).

[0027] All publications, patents and patent applications cited herein, whether *supra* or *infra*, are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety.

[0028] As used in this specification and any appended claims, the singular forms "a," "an" and "the" include plural references unless the content clearly dictates otherwise. Thus, for example, the term "microparticle" refers to one or more microparticles, and the like.

[0029] Unless stated otherwise, all percentages and ratios herein are given on a weight basis.

A. Definitions

[0030] In describing the present invention, the following terms will be employed, and are intended to be defined as indicated below.

[0031] The term "microparticle" as used herein, refers to a particle of about 10 nm to about 150 μ m in diameter, more typically about 200 nm to about 30 μ m in diameter, and even more typically about 500 nm to about 10-20 μ m in diameter. The microparticles of

the present invention may aggregate into larger masses under some circumstances. As a specific example, the microparticles of the present invention having adsorbed DNA may be, for instance, about 0.5-2 μm in diameter pre-lyophilization, while the same particles may be, for instance, in aggregates having a diameter of about 5-15 μm post-lyophilization. The microparticle will generally be of a diameter that permits parenteral or mucosal administration without occluding needles and capillaries. Microparticle size is readily determined by techniques well known in the art, such as photon correlation spectroscopy, laser diffractometry and/or scanning electron microscopy. The term "particle" may also be used to denote a microparticle as defined herein.

[0032] Polymer microparticles for use herein are typically formed from materials that are sterilizable, substantially non-toxic, and biodegradable. Such materials include biodegradable polymers such as poly(α -hydroxy acids), polyhydroxybutyric acids, polycaprolactones, polyorthoesters, polyanhydrides, and polycyanoacrylates (e.g., polyalkylcyanoacrylate or "PACA"). More typically, microparticles for use with the present invention are polymer microparticles derived from poly(α -hydroxy acids), for example, from a poly(lactide) ("PLA") or a copolymer of lactide and glycolide, such as a poly(D,L-lactide-co-glycolide) ("PLG"), or a copolymer of D,L-lactide and caprolactone. The polymer microparticles may be derived from any of various polymeric starting materials which have a variety of molecular weights and, in the case of the copolymers such as PLG, a variety of monomer (e.g., lactide:glycolide) ratios, the selection of which will be largely a matter of choice, depending in part on the coadministered species. These parameters are discussed further below.

[0033] The term "surfactant" as used herein includes detergents, dispersing agents, suspending agents, and emulsion stabilizers. Cationic surfactants for use in the polymer microparticle compositions of the present invention include, but are not limited to, cetyltrimethylammonium bromide or "CTAB" (e.g., cetrimide), benzalkonium chloride, DDA (dimethyl dioctodecyl ammonium bromide), DOTAP (dioleoyl-3-trimethylammonium-propane), and the like. Anionic surfactants include, but are not limited to, SDS (sodium dodecyl sulfate), SLS (sodium lauryl sulfate), DSS (disulfosuccinate), sulphated fatty alcohols, and the like. Nonionic surfactants include, but are not limited to, PVA, povidone (also known as polyvinylpyrrolidone or PVP),

sorbitan esters, polysorbates, polyoxyethylated glycol monoethers, polyoxyethylated alkyl phenols, poloxamers, and the like.

[0034] The term "submicron emulsion" as used herein refers to an oil-in-water emulsion comprising oil droplets, substantially all of which range in size up to 1000 nm, for example, from 10 nm to 1000 nm.

[0035] The term "pharmaceutical" refers to biologically active compounds such as antibiotics, antiviral agents, growth factors, hormones, antigens and the like.

[0036] The term "adjuvant" refers to any substance that assists or modifies the action of a pharmaceutical, including but not limited to immunological adjuvants, which increase or diversify the immune response to an antigen. Hence, immunological adjuvants are compounds that are capable of potentiating an immune response to antigens. Immunological adjuvants can potentiate humoral and/or cellular immunity.

[0037] A "polynucleotide" is a nucleic acid polymer. A polynucleotide can include as little as 5, 6, 7 or 8 nucleotides. Furthermore, a "polynucleotide" can include both double- and single-stranded sequences and refers to, but is not limited to, cDNA from viral, procaryotic or eucaryotic mRNA, genomic RNA and DNA sequences from viral (e.g. RNA and DNA viruses and retroviruses) or procaryotic DNA, and synthetic DNA sequences. The term also captures sequences that include any of the known base analogs of DNA and RNA. The term further includes modifications, such as deletions, additions and substitutions (generally conservative in nature), to a native sequence, for example, where the nucleic acid molecule encodes an antigenic protein. These modifications may be deliberate, as through site-directed mutagenesis, or may be accidental, such as through mutations of hosts that produce antigens.

[0038] As used herein, the phrase "nucleic acid" refers to DNA, RNA, or chimeras formed therefrom.

[0039] A "polynucleotide-containing species" is a molecule, at least a portion of which is a polynucleotide. Examples include RNA vector constructs, DNA vector constructs and so forth.

[0040] The terms "polypeptide" and "protein" refer to a polymer of amino acid residues and are not limited to a minimum length of the product. Thus, peptides, oligopeptides, dimers, multimers, and the like, are included within the definition. Both full-length proteins and fragments thereof are encompassed by the definition. The terms

also include modifications, such as deletions, additions and substitutions (generally conservative in nature), to a native sequence, for example, such that the protein maintains the ability to elicit an immunological response or have a therapeutic effect on a subject to which the protein is administered.

[0041] A “polypeptide-containing species” is a molecule, at least a portion of which is a polypeptide. Examples include polypeptides, proteins including glycoproteins, saccharide antigens conjugated to carrier proteins, and so forth.

[0042] By “antigen” is meant a molecule that contains one or more epitopes capable of stimulating a host's immune system to make a cellular antigen-specific immune response when the antigen is presented, or a humoral antibody response. An antigen may be capable of eliciting a cellular and/or humoral response by itself or when present in combination with another molecule.

[0043] An “epitope” is that portion of an antigenic molecule or antigenic complex that determines its immunological specificity. An epitope is within the scope of the present definition of antigen. Commonly, an epitope is a polypeptide or polysaccharide in a naturally occurring antigen. In artificial antigens it can be a low molecular weight substance such as an arsanilic acid derivative. An epitope will react specifically *in vivo* or *in vitro* with, for example, homologous antibodies or T lymphocytes. Alternative descriptors are antigenic determinant, antigenic structural grouping and haptenic grouping.

[0044] Typically, an epitope will include between about 5-15 amino acids. Epitopes of a given protein can be identified using any number of epitope mapping techniques, well known in the art. See, e.g., *Epitope Mapping Protocols* in *Methods in Molecular Biology*, Vol. 66 (Glenn E. Morris, Ed., 1996) Humana Press, Totowa, New Jersey. For example, linear epitopes may be determined by, for example, concurrently synthesizing large numbers of peptides on solid supports, the peptides corresponding to portions of the protein molecule, and reacting the peptides with antibodies while the peptides are still attached to the supports. Such techniques are known in the art and described in, e.g., U.S. Patent No. 4,708,871; Geysen et al. (1984) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 81:3998-4002; Geysen et al. (1986) *Molec. Immunol.* 23:709-715. Similarly, conformational epitopes are readily identified by determining spatial conformation of amino acids such as by, e.g.,

x-ray crystallography and 2-dimensional nuclear magnetic resonance. See, e.g., *Epitope Mapping Protocols*, *supra*.

[0045] The term "antigen" as used herein denotes both subunit antigens, i.e., antigens which are separate and discrete from a whole organism with which the antigen is associated in nature, as well as killed, attenuated or inactivated bacteria, viruses, parasites or other pathogens or tumor cells. Antibodies such as anti-idiotypic antibodies, or fragments thereof, and synthetic peptide mimotopes, which can mimic an antigen or antigenic determinant, are also captured under the definition of antigen as used herein.

[0046] Similarly, an oligonucleotide or polynucleotide that expresses an immunogenic protein, or antigenic determinant *in vivo*, such as in nucleic acid immunization applications, is also included in the definition of antigen herein.

[0047] Furthermore, for purposes of the present invention, an "antigen" refers to a protein, which includes modifications, such as deletions, additions and substitutions (generally conservative in nature), to the native sequence, so long as the protein maintains the ability to elicit an immunological response. These modifications may be deliberate, as through site-directed mutagenesis, or may be accidental, such as through mutations of hosts which produce the antigens.

[0048] An "immunological response" to an antigen or composition is the development in a subject of a humoral and/or a cellular immune response to molecules present in the composition of interest. For purposes of the present invention, a "humoral immune response" refers to an immune response mediated by antibody molecules, while a "cellular immune response" is one mediated by T-lymphocytes and/or other white blood cells. One important aspect of cellular immunity involves an antigen-specific response by cytolytic T-cells ("CTLs"). CTLs have specificity for peptide antigens that are presented in association with proteins encoded by the major histocompatibility complex (MHC) and expressed on the surfaces of cells. CTLs help induce and promote the intracellular destruction of intracellular microbes, or the lysis of cells infected with such microbes. Another aspect of cellular immunity involves an antigen-specific response by helper T-cells. Helper T-cells act to help stimulate the function, and focus the activity of, nonspecific effector cells against cells displaying peptide antigens in association with MHC molecules on their surface. A "cellular immune response" also refers to the production of cytokines, chemokines and other such molecules produced by activated T-

cells and/or other white blood cells, including those derived from CD4+ and CD8+ T-cells.

[0049] A composition such as an immunogenic composition or vaccine that elicits a cellular immune response may serve to sensitize a vertebrate subject by the presentation of antigen in association with MHC molecules at the cell surface. The cell-mediated immune response is directed at, or near, cells presenting antigen at their surface. In addition, antigen-specific T-lymphocytes can be generated to allow for the future protection of an immunized host.

[0050] The ability of a particular antigen or composition to stimulate a cell-mediated immunological response may be determined by a number of assays, such as by lymphoproliferation (lymphocyte activation) assays, CTL cytotoxic cell assays, by assaying for T-lymphocytes specific for the antigen in a sensitized subject, or by measurement of cytokine production by T cells in response to restimulation with antigen. Such assays are well known in the art. See, e.g., Erickson et al., *J. Immunol.* (1993) 151:4189-4199; Doe et al., *Eur. J. Immunol.* (1994) 24:2369-2376; and the examples below.

[0051] The antigen of interest may also elicit an antibody-mediated immune response. Hence, an immunological response may include one or more of the following effects: the production of antibodies by B-cells; and/or the activation of suppressor T-cells and/or $\gamma\delta$ T-cells directed specifically to an antigen or antigens present in the composition or vaccine of interest. These responses may serve to neutralize infectivity, and/or mediate antibody-complement, or antibody dependent cell cytotoxicity (ADCC) to provide protection to an immunized host. Such responses can be determined using standard immunoassays and neutralization assays, well known in the art, for instance, radioimmunoassays and ELISAs.

[0052] The immunogenic compositions of the present invention display "enhanced immunogenicity" when they possess a greater capacity to elicit an immune response than the immune response elicited by an equivalent amount of the antigen in a differing composition. Thus, a composition may display "enhanced immunogenicity," for example, because the composition generates a stronger immune response, or because a lower dose of antigen is necessary to achieve an immune response in the subject to which it is administered. Such enhanced immunogenicity can be determined, for example, by

administering the compositions of the invention, and antigen controls, to animals and comparing assay results of the two.

[0053] As used herein, "treatment" (including variations thereof, for example, "treat" or "treated") refers to any of (i) the prevention of a pathogen or disorder in question (e.g. cancer or a pathogenic infection, as in a traditional vaccine), (ii) the reduction or elimination of symptoms, and (iii) the substantial or complete elimination of the pathogen or disorder in question. Treatment may be effected prophylactically (prior to arrival of the pathogen or disorder in question) or therapeutically (following arrival of the same).

[0054] The terms "effective amount" or "pharmaceutically effective amount" of an immunogenic composition of the present invention refer herein to a sufficient amount of the immunogenic composition to treat or diagnose a condition of interest. The exact amount required will vary from subject to subject, depending, for example, on the species, age, and general condition of the subject; the severity of the condition being treated; the particular antigen of interest; in the case of an immunological response, the capacity of the subject's immune system to synthesize antibodies, for example, and the degree of protection desired; and the mode of administration, among other factors. An appropriate "effective" amount in any individual case may be determined by one of ordinary skill in the art. Thus, a "therapeutically effective amount" will typically fall in a relatively broad range that can be determined through routine trials.

[0055] By "vertebrate subject" or "vertebrate animal" is meant any member of the subphylum cordata, including, without limitation, mammals such as cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, horses, and humans; domestic animals such as dogs and cats; and birds, including domestic, wild and game birds such as cocks and hens including chickens, turkeys and other gallinaceous birds. The term does not denote a particular age. Thus, both adult and newborn animals are covered.

[0056] By "pharmaceutically acceptable" or "pharmacologically acceptable" is meant a material which is not biologically or otherwise undesirable, i.e., the material may be administered to an individual without causing any excessively undesirable biological effects in the individual or interacting in an excessively deleterious manner with any of the components of the composition in which it is contained.

[0057] The term "excipient" refers to any essentially accessory substance that may

be present in the finished dosage form. For example, the term "excipient" includes vehicles, binders, disintegrants, fillers (diluent), lubricants, glidants (flow enhancers), compression aids, colors, sweeteners, preservatives, suspending/dispersing agents, film formers/coatings, flavors and printing inks.

[0058] By "physiological pH" or a "pH in the physiological range" is meant a pH in the range of approximately 7.2 to 8.0 inclusive, more typically in the range of approximately 7.2 to 7.6 inclusive.

[0059] As used herein, the phrase "vector construct" generally refers to any assembly that is capable of directing the expression of a nucleic acid sequence(s) or gene(s) of interest. A vector construct typically includes transcriptional promoter/enhancer or locus defining element(s), or other elements which control gene expression by other means such as alternate splicing, nuclear RNA export, post-translational modification of messenger, or post-transcriptional modification of protein. In addition, the vector construct typically includes a sequence which, when transcribed, is operably linked to the sequence(s) or gene(s) of interest and acts as a translation initiation sequence. The vector construct may also optionally include a signal that directs polyadenylation, a selectable marker, as well as one or more restriction sites and a translation termination sequence. In addition, if the vector construct is placed into a retrovirus, the vector construct may include a packaging signal, long terminal repeats (LTRs), and positive and negative strand primer binding sites appropriate to the retrovirus used (if these are not already present).

[0060] A "DNA vector construct" refers to a DNA molecule that is capable of directing the expression of a nucleic acid sequence(s) or gene(s) of interest.

[0061] One specific type of DNA vector construct is a plasmid, which is a circular episomal DNA molecule capable of autonomous replication within a host cell. Typically, a plasmid is a circular double stranded DNA loop into which additional DNA segments can be ligated. pCMV is one specific plasmid that is well known in the art. A preferred pCMV vector is one which contains the immediate-early enhancer/promoter of CMV and a bovine growth hormone terminator. It is described in detail in Chapman, B. S., et al. 1991. "Effect of intron A from human cytomegalovirus (Towne) immediate-early gene on heterologous expression in mammalian cells." *Nucleic Acids Res.* **19**:3979-86.

[0062] Other DNA vector constructs are known, which are based on RNA viruses.

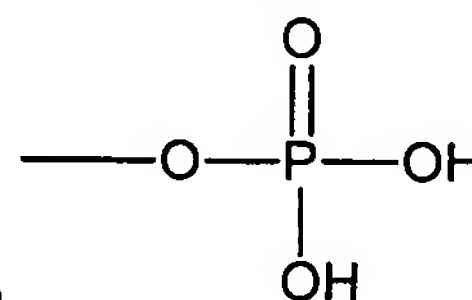
These DNA vector constructs typically comprise a promoter that functions in a eukaryotic cell, 5' of a cDNA sequence for which the transcription product is an RNA vector construct (e.g., an alphavirus RNA vector replicon), and a 3' termination region. The RNA vector construct preferably comprises an RNA genome from a picornavirus, togavirus, flavivirus, coronavirus, paramyxovirus, yellow fever virus, or alphavirus (e.g., Sindbis virus, Semliki Forest virus, Venezuelan equine encephalitis virus, or Ross River virus), which has been modified by the replacement of one or more structural protein genes with a selected heterologous nucleic acid sequence encoding a product of interest. The RNA vector constructs can be obtained by transcription *in vitro* from a DNA template. Specific examples include Sindbis-virus-based plasmids (pSIN) such as pSINCP, described, for example, in U.S. Patents 5,814,482 and 6,015,686, as well as in International Patent Applications WO 97/38087, WO 99/18226 and commonly owned WO 02/26209. The construction of such vectors, in general, is described in U.S. Patents 5,814,482 and 6,015,686.

[0063] Other examples of vector constructs include RNA vector constructs (e.g., alphavirus vector constructs) and the like. As used herein, "RNA vector construct", "RNA vector replicon" and "replicon" refer to an RNA molecule that is capable of directing its own amplification or self-replication *in vivo*, typically within a target cell. The RNA vector construct is used directly, without the requirement for introduction of DNA into a cell and transport to the nucleus where transcription would occur. By using the RNA vector for direct delivery into the cytoplasm of the host cell, autonomous replication and translation of the heterologous nucleic acid sequence occurs efficiently.

B. General Methods

1. Phospholipids

[0064] Phospholipid compounds are used in connection with the present invention. Examples include synthetic phospholipid compounds comprising: (a) one or more phosphoryl groups (wherein a phosphoryl group is represented by the radical P=O),

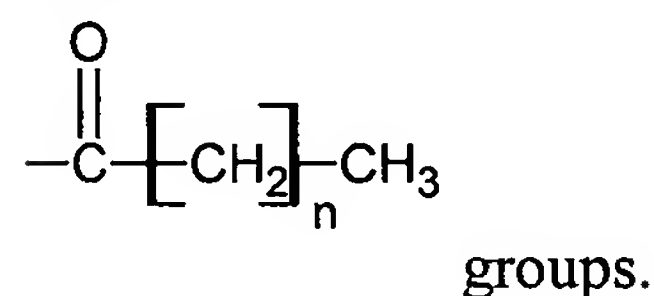


typically independently selected from a phosphato group, and a

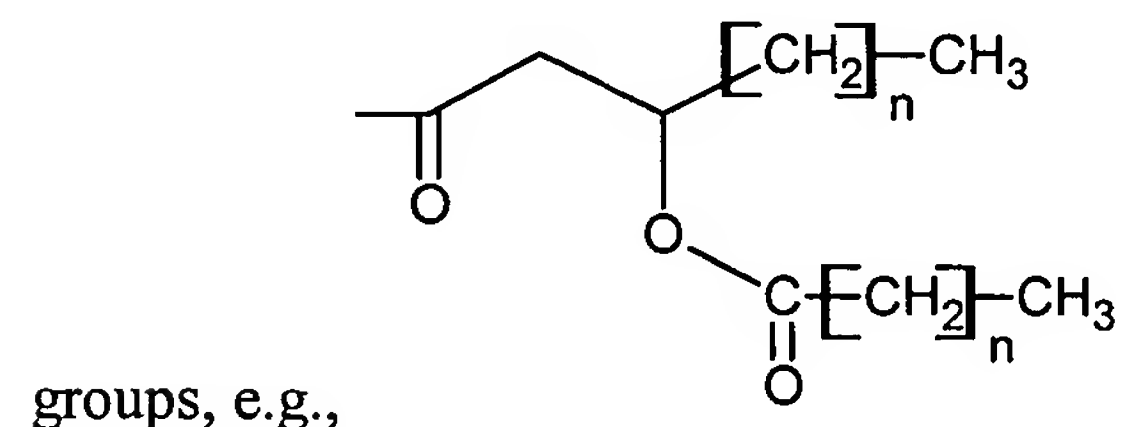
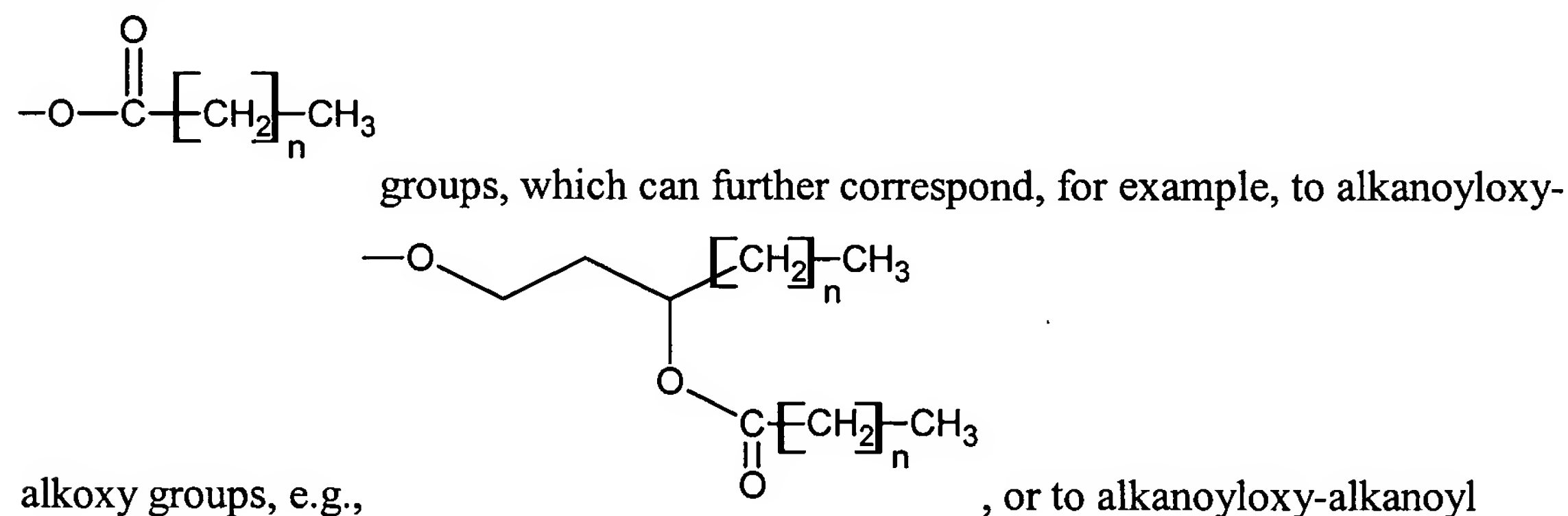
phosphodiester group $\begin{array}{c} \text{O} \\ \parallel \\ \text{---O---P---O---} \\ | \\ \text{OH} \end{array}$, and (b) a plurality (typically, three to ten, more

typically four to eight, even more typically six) of linear alkane groups, $\text{---}[\text{CH}_2]_n\text{---CH}_3$, in which n is independently an integer ranging from 6 to 18, i.e., 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 or 18, as well as pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

In certain embodiments, at least three, and in other embodiments at least four, of the alkane groups will independently be associated with alkanoyl groups, i.e.,



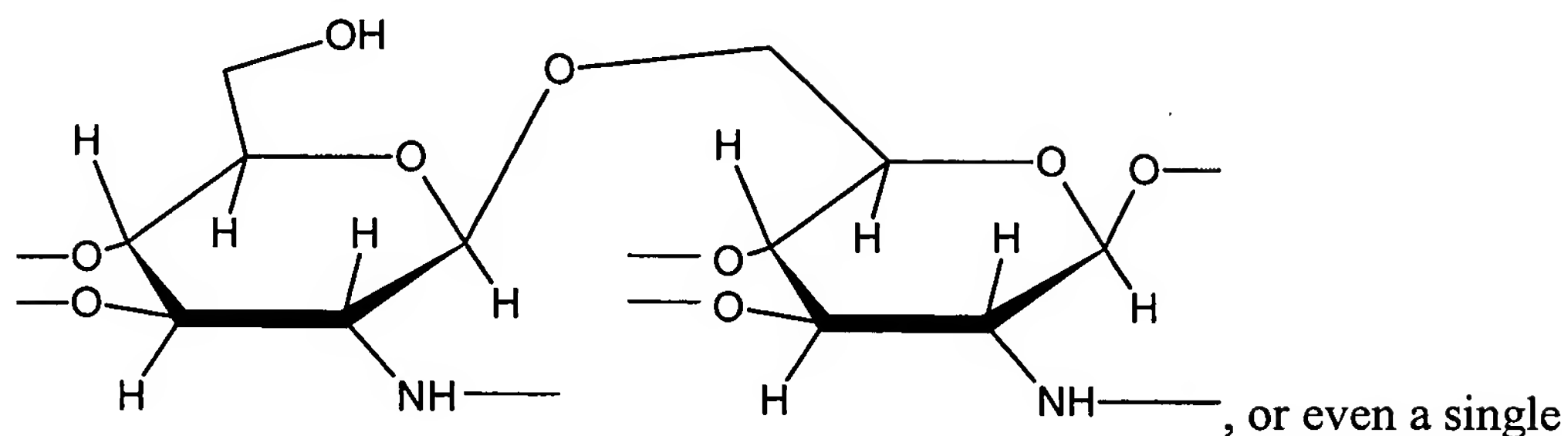
In certain embodiments, a plurality, and in other embodiments at least two, three or four, of the alkane groups will correspond to alkanoyloxy groups, i.e.,



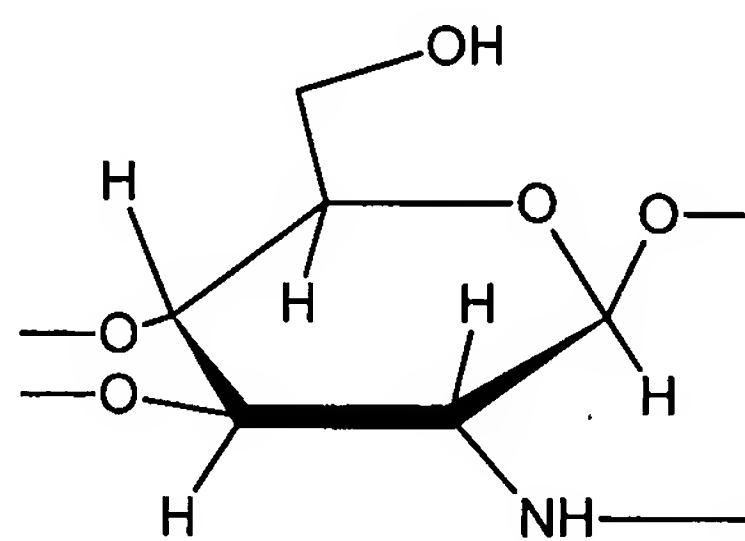
[0065] In certain embodiments, the phospholipid compound contains, two, three, four or more diphosphoryl groups. For example, the phospholipid compound can be a diphosphato phospholipid compound, or a di-phosphodiester phospholipid compound.

[0066] In numerous embodiments, the phospholipid compound does not comprise a

glucosamine disaccharide group, e.g.,

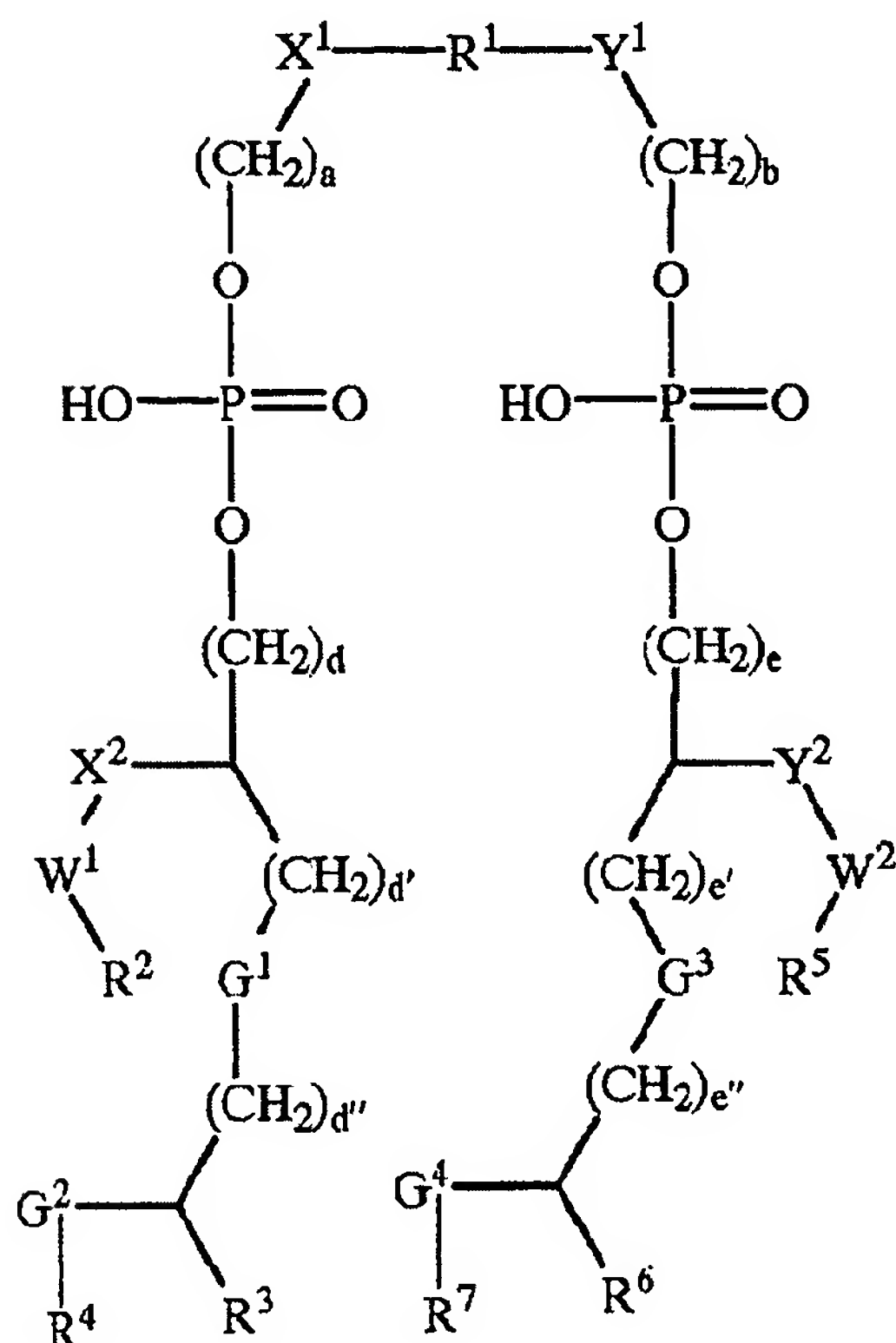


glucosamine saccharide group, e.g.,



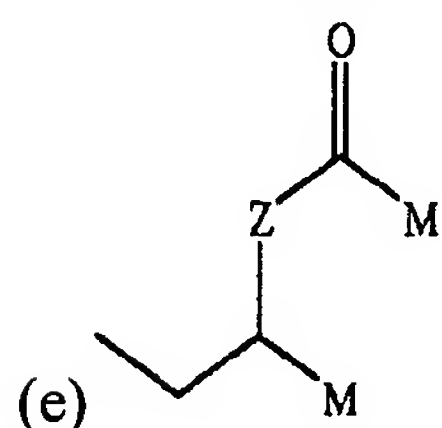
. In still others, the phospholipid compound does not comprise any saccharide group whatsoever.

[0067] One example of a family of phospholipid compounds for use in the present invention is the family of phospholipid compounds having the following formula:



wherein:

- [0068] R^1 is selected from the group consisting of
- (a) C(O);
 - (b) C(O) C_{1-14} alkyl-C(O), wherein the C_{1-14} alkyl is optionally substituted with hydroxy, C_{1-5} alkoxy, C_{1-5} alkylendioxy, C_{1-5} alkylamino, or C_{1-5} -alkyl-aryl, wherein the aryl moiety of the C_{1-5} -alkyl-aryl is optionally substituted with C_{1-5} alkoxy, C_{1-5} alkylamino, C_{1-5} alkoxy-amino, C_{1-5} alkylamino- C_{1-5} alkoxy, O C_{1-5} alkylamino- C_{1-5} alkoxy, O C_{1-5} alkylamino-C(O) C_{1-5} alkyl C(O)OH, O C_{1-5} alkylamino-C(O) C_{1-5} alkyl-C(O) C_{1-5} alkyl;
 - (c) C_2 to C_{15} straight or branched chain alkyl optionally substituted with hydroxy or alkoxy; and
 - (d) C(O) C_{6-12} arylene-C(O) wherein the arylene is optionally substituted with hydroxy, halogen, nitro or amino;
- [0069] a and b are independently 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4;
- [0070] d, d', d'', e, e' and e'' are independently an integer from 1 to 4;
- [0071] X^1 , X^2 , Y^1 and Y^2 are independently selected from the group consisting of a null, oxygen, NH and N(C(O) C_{1-4} alkyl), and N(C_{1-4} alkyl) $_2$;
- [0072] W^1 and W^2 are independently selected from the group consisting of carbonyl, methylene, sulfone and sulfoxide;
- [0073] R^2 and R^5 are independently selected from the group consisting of:
- (a) C_2 to C_{20} straight chain or branched chain alkyl which is optionally substituted with oxo, hydroxy or alkoxy,
 - (b) C_2 to C_{20} straight chain or branched chain alkenyl or dialkenyl which is optionally substituted with oxo, hydroxy or alkoxy;
 - (c) C_2 to C_{20} straight chain or branched chain alkoxy which is optionally substituted with oxo, hydroxy or alkoxy;
 - (d) NH C_2 to C_{20} straight chain or branched chain alkyl, wherein the alkyl group is optionally substituted with oxo, hydroxy or alkoxy; and



wherein Z is selected from the group consisting of O and NH, and M and N are independently selected from the group consisting of C₂ to C₂₀ straight chain or branched chain alkyl, alkenyl, alkoxy, acyloxy, alkylamino, and acylamino;

[0074] R³ and R⁶ are independently selected from the group consisting of C₂ to C₂₀ straight chain or branched chain alkyl or alkenyl, optionally substituted with fluoro or oxo;

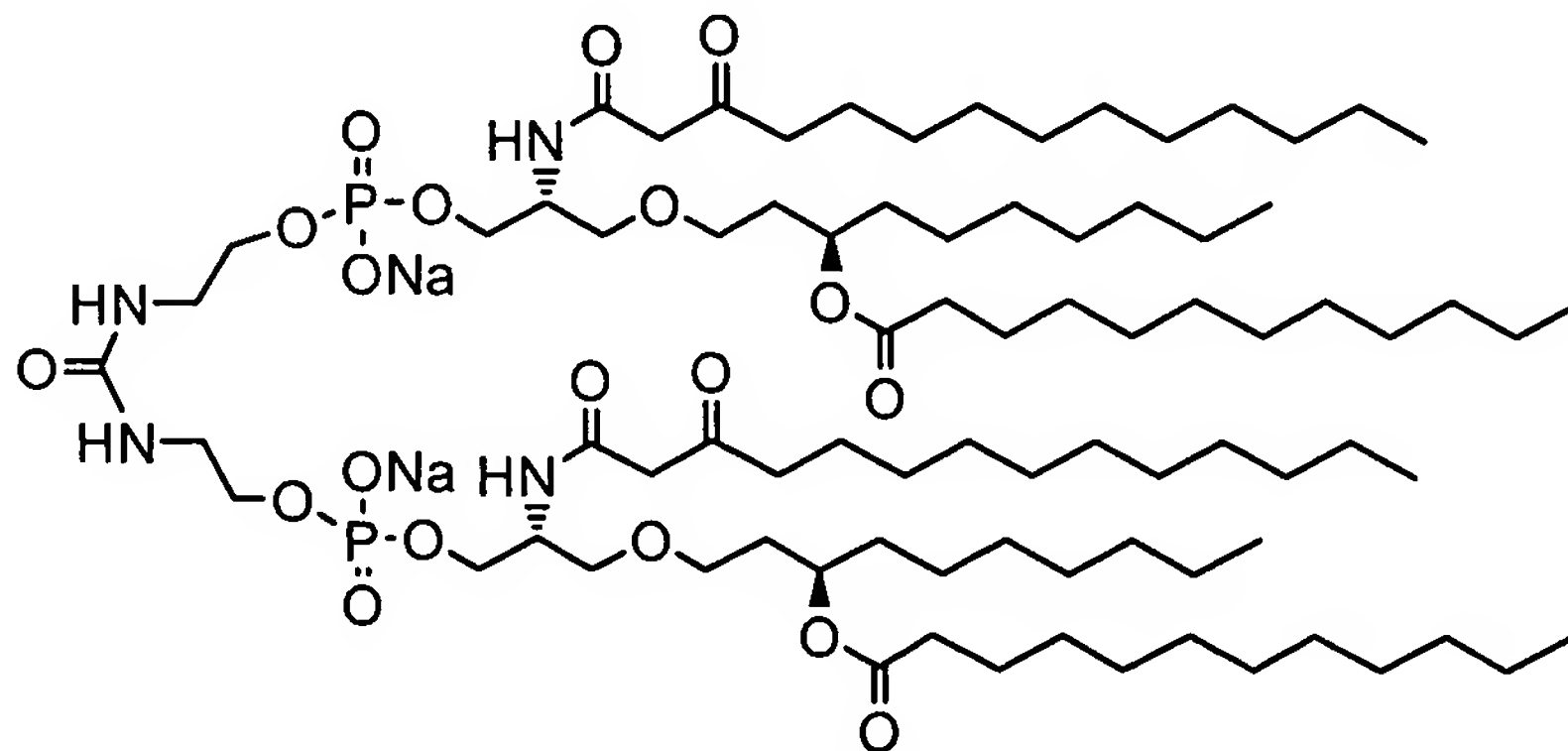
[0075] R⁴ and R⁷ are independently selected from the group consisting of C(O)C₂ to C₂₀ straight chain or branched chain alkyl or alkenyl; C₂ to C₂₀ straight chain or branched chain alkyl; C₂ to C₂₀ straight chain or branched chain alkoxy; C₂ to C₂₀ straight chain or branched chain alkenyl; wherein the alkyl, alkenyl or alkoxy groups are independently and optionally substituted with hydroxy, fluoro or C₁ to C₅ alkoxy;

[0076] G¹, G², G³ and G⁴ are independently selected from the group consisting of oxygen, methylene, amino, thiol, NHC(O), and N(C(O)C₁₋₄ alkyl); or G² R⁴ or G⁴ R⁷ may together be a hydrogen atom or hydroxyl;

[0077] or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

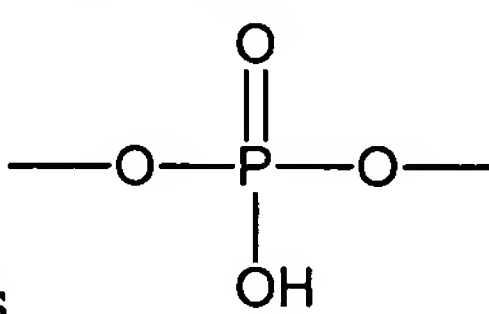
[0078] In some specific embodiments, R¹ is C(O); a, b d, d', d'', e e' and e'' are independently 1 or 2; X¹, X², Y¹ and Y² are NH; W¹ and W² are carbonyl; R² and R⁵ are C₁₀ to C₂₀ straight chain alkyl which is substituted with oxo; R³ and R⁶ are C₅-C₁₀ straight chain alkyl; R⁴ and R⁷ are C(O)C₈-C₁₁ straight chain alkyl; and G¹, G², G³ and G⁴ are oxygen.

[0079] An example of a specific compound for use in connection with the present invention is the following compound:

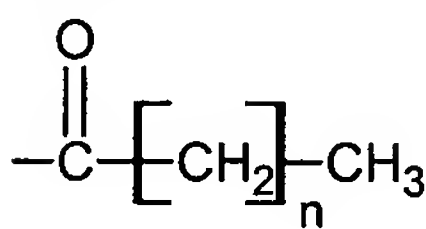


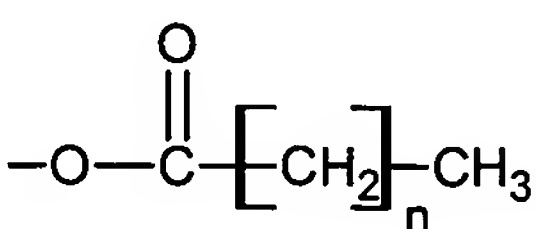
[0080] The compound illustrated is in the (R,R,R,R) enantiomeric form, but other

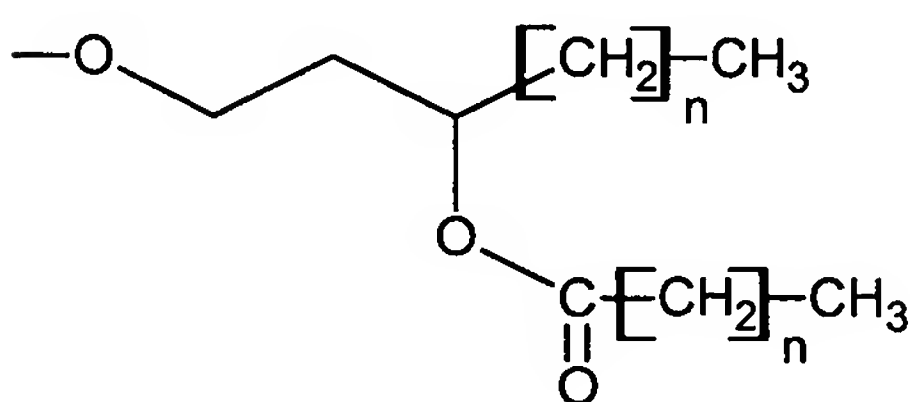
enantiomeric forms including the (R,S,S,R) form are also desirable. These compounds are synthetic compounds from Eisai Co. Ltd., Tokyo, Japan and are designated ER804057 and ER804053. They are members of the above family of phospholipids, in sodium salt form, where: R¹ is C(O); a and b are 2; d, d', e and e' are 1; d'' and e'' are 2; X¹, X², Y¹ and Y² are NH; W¹ and W² are carbonyl; R² and R⁵ are C₁₃ straight chain alkyl which is substituted with oxo at the 2 position; R³ and R⁶ are C₇ straight chain alkyl; R⁴ and R⁷ are C(O)C₁₁ straight chain alkyl; G¹, G², G³ and G⁴ are oxygen. This compound does not comprise any saccharide groups; it is a diphospholipid compound, as it comprises two

phosphodiester groups  (here, in the sodium salt form). This

compound also comprises six linear alkane groups, $\text{--[CH}_2\text{]}_n\text{CH}_3$, in which n is independently or 6 or 10. Four of the alkane groups correspond to alkanoyl groups,

, where n is 10. Two of these alkanoyl groups correspond to alkanoyloxy

groups, , which further correspond to alkanoyloxyalkoxy groups,

.

[0081] Further information concerning the above compounds and their preparation can

be found, for example, in U.S Patent No. 6,290,973 to Eisai Co., Ltd.

2. Antigens

[0082] The present invention will find use for stimulating an immune response against a wide variety of antigens, including antigens associated with pathogens and tumors.

[0083] Antigens from the herpesvirus family, including proteins derived from herpes simplex virus (HSV) types 1 and 2, such as HSV-1 and HSV-2 glycoproteins gB, gD and gH; antigens derived from varicella zoster virus (VZV), Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) and cytomegalovirus (CMV) including CMV gB and gH; and antigens derived from other human herpesviruses such as HHV6 and HHV7 can be conveniently used in connection with the present invention. (See, e.g. Chee et al., *Cytomegaloviruses* (J.K. McDougall, ed., Springer-Verlag 1990) pp. 125-169, for a review of the protein coding content of cytomegalovirus; McGeoch et al., *J. Gen. Virol.* (1988) 69:1531-1574, for a discussion of the various HSV-1 encoded proteins; U.S. Patent No. 5,171,568 for a discussion of HSV-1 and HSV-2 gB and gD proteins and the genes encoding therefor; Baer et al., *Nature* (1984) 310:207-211, for the identification of protein coding sequences in an EBV genome; and Davison and Scott, *J. Gen. Virol.* (1986) 67:1759-1816, for a review of VZV.)

[0084] Antigens from the hepatitis family of viruses, including hepatitis A virus (HAV), hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), the delta hepatitis virus (HDV), hepatitis E virus (HEV) and hepatitis G virus (HGV), can also be conveniently used in the techniques described herein. By way of example, the viral genomic sequence of HCV is known, as are methods for obtaining the sequence. See, e.g., International Publication Nos. WO 89/04669; WO 90/11089; and WO 90/14436. The HCV genome encodes several viral proteins, including E1 (also known as E) and E2 (also known as E2/NSI) and an N-terminal nucleocapsid protein (termed "core") (see, Houghton et al., *Hepatology* (1991) 14:381-388, for a discussion of HCV proteins, including E1 and E2). Each of these proteins, as well as antigenic fragments thereof, will find use in the present composition and methods.

[0085] Similarly, the sequence for the δ -antigen from HDV is known (see, e.g., U.S. Patent No. 5,378,814) and this antigen can also be conveniently used in the present composition and methods. Additionally, antigens derived from HBV, such as the core antigen, the surface antigen, sAg, as well as the presurface sequences, pre-S1 and pre-S2 (formerly called pre-S), as well as combinations of the above, such as sAg/pre-S1, sAg/pre-S2, sAg/pre-S1/pre-S2, and pre-S1/pre-S2, will find use herein. See, e.g., "HBV Vaccines - from the laboratory to license: a case study" in Mackett, M. and Williamson, J.D., *Human Vaccines and Vaccination*, pp. 159-176, for a discussion of HBV structure;

and U.S. Patent Nos. 4,722,840, 5,098,704, 5,324,513, incorporated herein by reference in their entireties; Beames et al., *J. Virol.* (1995) 69:6833-6838, Birnbaum et al., *J. Virol.* (1990) 64:3319-3330; and Zhou et al., *J. Virol.* (1991) 65:5457-5464.

[0086] Antigens derived from other viruses will also find use in the compositions and methods of the present invention, such as without limitation, proteins from members of the families Picornaviridae (e.g., polioviruses, etc.); Caliciviridae; Togaviridae (e.g., rubella virus, dengue virus, etc.); Flaviviridae; Coronaviridae; Reoviridae; Birnaviridae; Rhabdoviridae (e.g., rabies virus, etc.); Filoviridae; Paramyxoviridae (e.g., mumps virus, measles virus, respiratory syncytial virus, etc.); Orthomyxoviridae (e.g., influenza virus types A, B and C, etc.); Bunyaviridae; Arenaviridae; Retroviridae (e.g., HTLV-I; HTLV-II; HIV-1 (also known as HTLV-III, LAV, ARV, hTLR, etc.)), including but not limited to antigens from the isolates HIV_{IIIb}, HIV_{SF2}, HIV_{LAV}, HIV_{LAI}, HIV_{MN}); HIV-1_{CM235}, HIV-1_{US4}; HIV-2; simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV) among others. Additionally, antigens may also be derived from human papillomavirus (HPV) and the tick-borne encephalitis viruses. See, e.g. *Virology*, 3rd Edition (W.K. Joklik ed. 1988); *Fundamental Virology*, 2nd Edition (B.N. Fields and D.M. Knipe, eds. 1991), for a description of these and other viruses.

[0087] More particularly, the gp120 or gp140 envelope proteins from any of the above HIV isolates, including members of the various genetic subtypes of HIV, are known and reported (see, e.g., Myers et al., Los Alamos Database, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico (1992); Myers et al., *Human Retroviruses and Aids*, 1990, Los Alamos, New Mexico: Los Alamos National Laboratory; and Modrow et al., *J. Virol.* (1987) 61:570-578, for a comparison of the envelope sequences of a variety of HIV isolates) and antigens derived from any of these isolates will find use in the present methods. Furthermore, the invention is equally applicable to other immunogenic proteins derived from any of the various HIV isolates, including any of the various envelope proteins such as gp160 and gp41, gag antigens such as p24gag and p55gag, as well as proteins derived from the pol and tat regions.

[0088] Influenza virus is another example of a virus for which the present invention will be particularly useful. Specifically, the envelope glycoproteins HA and NA of influenza A are of particular interest for generating an immune response. Numerous HA subtypes of influenza A have been identified (Kawaoka et al., *Virology* (1990) 179:759-

767; Webster et al., "Antigenic variation among type A influenza viruses," p. 127-168. In: P. Palese and D.W. Kingsbury (ed.), *Genetics of influenza viruses*. Springer-Verlag, New York). Thus, proteins derived from any of these isolates can also be used in the compositions and methods described herein.

[0089] The compositions and methods described herein will also find use with numerous bacterial antigens, such as those derived from organisms that cause diphtheria, cholera, tuberculosis, tetanus, pertussis, meningitis, and other pathogenic states, including, without limitation, *Bordetella pertussis*, *Neisseria meningitides* (A, B, C, Y), *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, *Helicobacter pylori*, and *Haemophilus influenza*. *Hemophilus influenza* type B (HIB), *Helicobacter pylori*, and combinations thereof. Examples of antigens from *Neisseria meningitides* B are disclosed in the following co-owned patent applications: PCT/US99/09346; PCT IB98/01665; and PCT IB99/00103. Examples of parasitic antigens include those derived from organisms causing malaria and Lyme disease.

[0090] Additional antigens for use with the invention, which are not necessarily exclusive of those listed elsewhere in this application, include the following: (a) a protein antigen from *N. meningitidis* serogroup B, such as those in Refs. 1 to 7 below; (b) an outer-membrane vesicle (OMV) preparation from *N. meningitidis* serogroup B, such as those disclosed in Refs. 8, 9, 10, 11, etc. below; (c) a saccharide antigen from *N. meningitidis* serogroup A, C, W135 and/or Y, such as the oligosaccharide disclosed in Ref. 12 below from serogroup C (see also Ref. 13); (d) a saccharide antigen from *Streptococcus pneumoniae* [e.g. Refs. 14, 15, 16]. (e) an antigen from *N. gonorrhoeae* [e.g., Refs. 1, 2, 3]; (e) an antigen from *Chlamydia pneumoniae* [e.g., Refs. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23]; (f) an antigen from *Chlamydia trachomatis* [e.g. Ref. 24]; (g) an antigen from hepatitis A virus, such as inactivated virus [e.g., Refs. 25, 26]; (h) an antigen from hepatitis B virus, such as the surface and/or core antigens [e.g., Refs. 26, 27]; (i) an antigen from hepatitis C virus [e.g. Ref. 28]; (j) an antigen from *Bordetella pertussis*, such as pertussis holotoxin (PT) and filamentous haemagglutinin (FHA) from *B. pertussis*, optionally also in combination with pertactin and/or agglutinogens 2 and 3 [e.g., Refs. 29 & 30]; (k) a diphtheria antigen, such as diphtheria toxoid [e.g., chapter 3 of Ref. 31] e.g. the CRM₁₉₇ mutant [e.g., Ref. 32]; (l) a tetanus antigen, such as a tetanus toxoid [e.g., chapter 4 of Ref. 31]; (m) a protein antigen from *Helicobacter pylori* such as CagA [e.g.

Ref. 33], VacA [e.g. Ref. 33], NAP [e.g. Ref. 34], HopX [e.g. Ref. 35], HopY [e.g. Ref. 35] and/or urease; (n) a saccharide antigen from *Haemophilus influenzae* B [e.g. Ref. 13]; (o) an antigen from *Porphyramonas gingivalis* [e.g. Ref. 36]; (p) polio antigen(s) [e.g. Refs. 37, 38] such as IPV or OPV; (q) rabies antigen(s) [e.g. Ref. 39] such as lyophilized inactivated virus [e.g. Ref. 40, RabavertTM]; (r) measles, mumps and/or rubella antigens [e.g., chapters 9, 10 and 11 of Ref. 31]; (s) influenza antigen(s) [e.g. chapter 19 of Ref. 31], such as the haemagglutinin and/or neuraminidase surface proteins; (t) an antigen from *Moraxella catarrhalis* [e.g., time 41]; (u) an antigen from *Streptococcus agalactiae* (Group B streptococcus) [e.g. Refs. 42, 43]; (v) an antigen from *Streptococcus pyogenes* (Group A streptococcus) [e.g. Refs. 43,44, 45]; (w) an antigen from *Staphylococcus aureus* [e.g. Ref. 46]; and (x) compositions comprising one or more of these antigens. Where a saccharide or carbohydrate antigen is used, it is preferably conjugated to a carrier protein in order to enhance immunogenicity [e.g. Refs. 47 to 56]. Preferred carrier proteins are bacterial toxins or toxoids, such as diphtheria or tetanus toxoids. The CRM₁₉₇ diphtheria toxoid is particularly preferred. Other suitable carrier proteins include *N. meningitidis* outer membrane protein [e.g. Ref. 57], synthetic peptides [e.g. Refs. 58, 59], heat shock proteins [e.g. Ref. 60], pertussis proteins [e.g. Refs. 61, 62], protein D from *H. Influenzae* [e.g. Ref. 63], toxin A or B from *C. difficile* [e.g. Ref. 64], etc. Where a mixture comprises capsular saccharides from both serogroups A and C, it is preferred that the ratio (w/w) of MenA saccharide:MenC saccharide is greater than 1 (e.g. 2:1, 3:1, 4:1, 5:1, 10:1 or higher). Saccharides from different serogroups of *N. meningitidis* may be conjugated to the same or different carrier proteins. Any suitable conjugation reaction can be used, with any suitable linker where necessary. Toxic protein antigens may be detoxified where necessary (e.g. detoxification of pertussis toxin by chemical and/or means [Ref. 30]. See: International patent application 99/24578 [Ref. 1]; International patent application WO99/36544 [Ref. 2]; International patent application WO99/57280 [Ref. 3]; International patent application WO00/22430 [Ref. 4]; Tettelin et al., (2000) *Science* 287:1809-1815 [Ref. 5]; International patent application WO96/29412 [Ref. 6]; Pizza et al. (2000) *Science* 287:1816-1820 [Ref. 7]; International patent application PCT/IB01/00166 [Ref. 8]; Bjune et al. (1991) *Lancet* 338(8775):1093-1096 [Ref. 9]; Fukasawa et al. (1990) *Vaccine* 17:2951-2958 [Ref. 10]; Rosenqvist et al. (1998) *Dev. Biol. Stand.* 92:323-333 [Ref. 11]; Costantino et al. (1992) *Vaccine* 10:691-698 [Ref. 12];

Costantino et al. (1999) *Vaccine* 17:1251-1263 [Ref. 13]; Watson (2000) *Pediatr Infect Dis J* 19:331-332 [Ref. 14]; Rubin (2000) *Pediatr Clin North Am* 47:269-285, v [Ref. 15]; Jedrzejewski (2001) *Microbiol Mol Biol Rev* 65:187-207 [Ref. 16]; International patent application filed on 3rd July 2001 claiming priority from GB-0016363.4 [Ref. 17]; Kalman et al. (1999) *Nature Genetics* 21:385-389 [Ref. 18]; Read et al. (2000) *Nucleic Acids Res* 28:1397-406 [Ref. 19]; Shirai et al. (2000) *J. Infect. Dis.* 181(Suppl 3):S524-S527 [Ref. 20]; International patent application WO99/27105 [Ref. 21]; International patent application WO00/27994 [Ref. 22]; International patent application WO00/37494 [Ref. 23]; International patent application WO99/28475 [Ref. 24]; Bell (2000) *Pediatr Infect Dis J* 19:1187-1188 [Ref. 25]; Iwarson (1995) *APMIS* 103:321-326 [Ref. 26]; Gerlich et al. (1990) *Vaccine* 8 Suppl:S63-68 & 79-80 [Ref. 27]; Hsu et al. (1999) *Clin Liver Dis* 3:901-915 [Ref. 28]; Gustafsson et al. (1996) *N. Engl. J. Med.* 334:349-355 [Ref. 29]; Rappuoli et al. (1991) *TIBTECH* 9:232-238 [Ref. 30]; *Vaccines* (1988) eds. Plotkin & Mortimer. ISBN 0-7216-1946-0 [Ref. 31]; Del Giudice et al. (1998) *Molecular Aspects of Medicine* 19:1-70 [Ref. 32]; International patent application WO93/18150 [Ref. 33]; International patent application WO99/53310 [Ref. 34]; International patent application WO98/04702 [Ref. 35]; Ross et al. (2001) *Vaccine* 19:4135-4142 [Ref. 36]; Sutter et al. (2000) *Pediatr Clin North Am* 47:287-308 [Ref. 37]; Zimmerman & Spann (1999) *Am Fam Physician* 59:113-118, 125-126 [Ref. 38]; Dreesen (1997) *Vaccine* 15 Suppl:S2-6 [Ref. 39]; *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 1998 Jan 16;47(1):12, 19 [Ref. 40]; McMichael (2000) *Vaccine* 19 Suppl 1:S101-107 [Ref. 41]; Schuchat (1999) *Lancet* 353(9146):51-6 [Ref. 42]; GB patent applications 0026333.5, 0028727.6 & 0105640.7 [Ref. 43]; Dale (1999) *Infect Dis Clin North Am* 13:227-43, viii [Ref. 44]; Ferretti et al. (2001) *PNAS USA* 98:4658-4663 [Ref. 45]; Kuroda et al. (2001) *Lancet* 357(9264):1225-1240; see also pages 1218-1219 [Ref. 46]; Ramsay et al. (2001) *Lancet* 357(9251):195-196 [Ref. 47]; Lindberg (1999) *Vaccine* 17 Suppl 2:S28-36 [Ref. 48]; Buttery & Moxon (2000) *J R Coll Physicians London* 34:163-168 [Ref. 49]; Ahmad & Chapnick (1999) *Infect Dis Clin North Am* 13:113-133, vii [Ref. 50]; Goldblatt (1998) *J. Med. Microbiol.* 47:563-567 [Ref. 51]; European patent 0 477 508 [Ref. 52]; US Patent No. 5,306,492 [Ref. 53]; International patent application WO98/42721 [Ref. 54]; *Conjugate Vaccines* (eds. Cruse et al.) ISBN 3805549326, particularly vol. 10:48-114 [Ref. 55]; Hermanson (1996) *Bioconjugate Techniques* ISBN: 0123423368 & 012342335X [Ref. 56]; European

patent application 0372501 [Ref. 57]; European patent application 0378881 [Ref. 58]; European patent application 0427347 [Ref. 59]; International patent application WO93/17712 [Ref. 60]; International patent application WO98/58668 [Ref. 61]; European patent application 0471177 [Ref. 62]; International patent application WO00/56360 [Ref. 63]; international patent application WO00/61761 [Ref. 64].

[0091] Where diphtheria antigen is included in the composition it is preferred also to include tetanus antigen and pertussis antigens. Similarly, where a tetanus antigen is included it is preferred also to include diphtheria and pertussis antigens. Similarly, where a pertussis antigen is included it is preferred also to include diphtheria and tetanus antigens.

[0092] Additional antigens include antigens directed to plague, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, smallpox, typhoid, typhus, feline leukemia virus, and yellow fever.

3. Immunogenic Emulsion Compositions

[0093] Various embodiments of the present invention are directed to immunogenic emulsion compositions. In addition to phospholipid and antigen species (discussed above) as well as optional supplemental components (discussed below), the immunogenic emulsion compositions of the present invention beneficially comprise (a) water, (b) a metabolizable oil and (c) an emulsifying agent. Typically, the immunogenic emulsion is an oil-in-water emulsion in which substantially all of the oil droplets are smaller than 1 micron in diameter, more typically smaller than 250 nm. In certain embodiments, the composition exists in the absence of any polyoxypropylene-polyoxyethylene block copolymer.

[0094] These immunogenic emulsion compositions typically comprise 0.5 to 20 % by volume oil, more typically 1 to 10% by volume oil, and even more typically 2 to 6 % by volume oil; and 80 to 99.5% by volume water, more typically 90 to 99 % by volume water. The compositions also typically comprise about 0.001 to about 5 % by weight emulsifying agent, more typically 0.001 to 1%, by weight emulsifying agent, even more typically 0.01 to 0.1% by weight emulsifying agent; about 0.1 to 5% by weight phospholipid, more typically 0.5 to 1% by weight phospholipid; where a polypeptide-containing antigen is employed, about 0.1 to 5% by weight polypeptide-containing antigen, more typically 0.5 to 1% by weight polypeptide-containing antigen; and where a

polynucleotide-containing antigen is employed, about 0.1 to 20% by weight polynucleotide-containing antigen, more typically about 1 to 10 % by weight polynucleotide-containing antigen.

[0095] The metabolizable oil is commonly one having about 6 to about 30 carbon atoms including, but not limited to, alkanes, alkenes, alkynes, and their corresponding acids and alcohols, the ethers and esters thereof, and mixtures thereof. The oil can be essentially any vegetable oil, fish oil, animal oil or synthetically prepared oil which can be metabolized by the body of the host animal to which the immunogenic emulsion compositions will be administered, and which is not substantially toxic to the subject. Mineral oil and similar toxic petroleum distillate oils are excluded from this invention.

[0096] For example, the oil component of this invention can be any long chain alkane, alkene or alkyne, or an acid or alcohol derivative thereof, for example, as the free acid, its salt or an ester thereof, such as a mono-, or di- or tri-esters, for instance, triglycerides, esters of 1,2-propanediol or similar poly-hydroxy alcohols. Alcohols can be acylated employing amino- or poly-functional acid, for example acetic acid, propanoic acid, citric acid or the like. Ethers derived from long chain alcohols which are oils and meet the criteria set forth herein can also be used.

[0097] The individual alkane, alkene or alkyne moiety and its acid or alcohol derivatives will generally have about 6 to about 30 carbon atoms. The moiety can have a straight or branched chain structure. It can be fully saturated or have one or more double or triple bonds. Where mono or poly ester- or ether-based oils are employed, the limitation of about 6 to about 30 carbons applies to the individual fatty acid or fatty alcohol moieties, not the total carbon count.

[0098] As a specific example, many fish contain metabolizable oils which may be readily recovered. For instance, cod liver oil, shark liver oils, and whale oil such as spermaceti exemplify several of the fish oils, which may be used herein. A number of branched chain oils can be synthesized biochemically in 5-carbon isoprene units and are generally referred to as terpenoids. Shark liver oil contains a branched, unsaturated terpenoids known as squalene, 2,6,10,15,19,23-hexamethyl-2,6,10,14,18,22-tetracosahexaene. Fish oils, including squalene and squalane, the saturated analog to squalene, are readily available from commercial sources or may be obtained by methods known in the art.

[0099] A substantial number of suitable emulsifying agents (also referred to herein as surfactants, detergents and so forth) are used in the pharmaceutical sciences, many of which are useful in the immunogenic emulsion compositions of the present invention, so long as they are sufficiently non-toxic. These include naturally derived materials such as gums from trees, vegetable protein, sugar-based polymers such as alginates and cellulose, and the like. Certain oxypolymers or polymers having a hydroxide or other hydrophilic substituent on the carbon backbone have surfactant activity, for example, povidone, polyvinyl alcohol, and glycol ether-based mono- and poly-functional compounds. Long chain fatty-acid-derived compounds form another substantial group of emulsifying agents that could be used in this invention.

[0100] Specific examples of suitable emulsifying agents that can be used in accordance with the present invention include the following: (1) Water-soluble soaps, such as the sodium, potassium, ammonium and alkanol-ammonium salts of higher fatty acids (C_{10} - C_{22}), and, particularly sodium and potassium tallow and coconut soaps. (2) Anionic synthetic non-soap detergents, which can be represented by the water-soluble salts of organic sulfuric acid reaction products having in their molecular structure an alkyl radical containing from about 8 to 22 carbon atoms and a radical selected from the group consisting of sulfonic acid and sulfuric acid ester radicals.

[0101] (3) Nonionic synthetic detergents made by the condensation of alkylene oxide groups with an organic hydrophobic compound. Typical hydrophobic groups include condensation products of propylene oxide with propylene glycol, alkyl phenols, condensation product of propylene oxide and ethylene diamine, aliphatic alcohols having 8 to 22 carbon atoms, and amides of fatty acids.

[0102] (4) Nonionic detergents, such as amine oxides, phosphine oxides and sulfoxides, having semipolar characteristics. (5) Long chain sulfoxides, including those corresponding to the formula $R_1 - SO - R_2$ wherein R_1 and R_2 are substituted or unsubstituted alkyl radicals, the former containing from about 10 to about 28 carbon atoms, whereas R_2 contains from 1 to 3 carbon atoms. (6) Ampholytic synthetic detergents, such as sodium 3-dodecylaminopropionate and sodium 3-dodecylaminopropane sulfonate. (7) Zwitterionic synthetic detergents, such as 3-(N,N-dimethyl-N-hexadecylammonio)propane-1-sulfonate and 3-(N,N-dimethyl-N-hexadecylammonio)-2-hydroxy propane-1-sulfonate.

[0100] The following types of emulsifying agents, which are not necessarily exclusive of those in the prior paragraph, can also be used in the immunogenic emulsion compositions of the present invention: (a) soaps (i.e., alkali salts) of fatty acids, rosin acids, and tall oil; (b) alkyl arene sulfonates; (c) alkyl sulfates, including surfactants with both branched-chain and straight-chain hydrophobic groups, as well as primary and secondary sulfate groups; (d) sulfates and sulfonates containing an intermediate linkage between the hydrophobic and hydrophilic groups, such as the fatty acylated methyl taurides and the sulfated fatty monoglycerides; (e) long-chain acid esters of polyethylene glycol, especially the tall oil esters; (f) polyethylene glycol ethers of alkylphenols; (g) polyethylene glycol ethers of long-chain alcohols and mercaptans; and (h) fatty acyl diethanol amides.

[0101] There are a number of emulsifying agents specifically designed for and commonly used in biological situations. For example, a number of biological detergents (surfactants) are listed as such by Sigma Chemical Company on pages 310-316 of its 1987 Catalog of Biochemical and Organic Compounds. Such surfactants are divided into four basic types: anionic, cationic, zwitterionic, and nonionic. Examples of anionic detergents include alginic acid, caprylic acid, cholic acid, 1-decanesulfonic acid, deoxycholic acid, 1-dodecanesulfonic acid, N-lauroylsarcosine, and taurocholic acid. Cationic detergents include dodecyltrimethylammonium bromide, benzalkonium chloride, benzyldimethylhexadecyl ammonium chloride, cetylpyridinium chloride, methylbenzethonium chloride, and 4-picoline dodecyl sulfate. Examples of zwitterionic detergents include 3-[(3-cholamidopropyl)-dimethylammonio]-1-propanesulfonate (commonly abbreviated CHAPS), 3-[(cholamidopropyl)dimethylammonio]-2-hydroxy-1-propanesulfonate (commonly abbreviated CHAPSO), N-dodecyl-N,N-dimethyl-3-ammonio-1-propanesulfonate, and lyso- α -phosphatidylcholine. Examples of nonionic detergents include decanoyl-N-methylglucamide, diethylene glycol monopentyl ether, n-dodecyl beta-D-glucopyranoside, ethylene oxide condensates of fatty alcohols (e.g., those sold under the trade name Lubrol), polyoxyethylene ethers of fatty acids (particularly C₁₂-C₂₀ fatty acids), polyoxyethylene sorbitan fatty acid esters (e.g., sold under the trade name Tween®), and sorbitan fatty acid esters (e.g., sold under the trade name Span®).

[0102] A particularly useful group of surfactants are the sorbitan-based non-ionic

surfactants. These surfactants are typically prepared by dehydration of sorbitol to give 1,4-sorbitan, which is then reacted with one or more equivalents of a fatty acid. The fatty-acid-substituted moiety may be further reacted with ethylene oxide to give a second group of surfactants.

[0103] The fatty-acid-substituted sorbitan surfactants are typically made by reacting 1,4-sorbitan with a fatty acid such as lauric acid, palmitic acid, stearic acid, oleic acid, or a similar long chain fatty acid to give the 1,4-sorbitan mono-ester, 1,4-sorbitan sesquiester or 1,4-sorbitan triester. The common names for some of these surfactants include, for example, sorbitan monolaurate, sorbitan monopalmitate, sorbitan monostearate, sorbitan monooleate, sorbitan sesquioleate, and sorbitan trioleate. These surfactants are commercially available under the names SPAN® or ARLACEL®.

[0104] SPAN® and ARLACEL® surfactants are lipophilic and are generally soluble or dispersible in oil. They are also soluble in most organic solvents. In water they are generally insoluble but dispersible. Generally these surfactants will have a hydrophilic-lipophilic balance (HLB) number between 1.8 and 8.6. Such surfactants can be readily made by means known in the art or are commercially available from, for example, ICI America's Inc., Wilmington, DE under the registered mark ATLAS®.

[0105] A related group of surfactants comprises polyoxyethylene sorbitan monoesters and polyoxyethylene sorbitan triesters. These materials are typically prepared by addition of ethylene oxide to a 1,4-sorbitan monoester or triester. The addition of polyoxyethylene converts the lipophilic sorbitan mono- or triester surfactant into a hydrophilic surfactant generally soluble or dispersible in water and soluble to varying degrees in organic liquids. The TWEEN® surfactants may be combined, for example, with a related sorbitan monoester or triester surfactant to promote emulsion stability. TWEEN® surfactants generally have a HLB value falling between 9.6 and 16.7. TWEEN® surfactants are commercially available from a number of manufacturers, for example ICI America's Inc., Wilmington, Del. under the registered mark ATLAS® surfactants.

[0106] Another group of non-ionic surfactants which could be used alone or in conjunction with SPAN®, ARLACEL® and/or TWEEN® surfactants are the polyoxyethylene fatty acids made by the reaction of ethylene oxide with a long-chain fatty acid. The most commonly available surfactant of this type is solid under the name

MYRJ® and is a polyoxyethylene derivative of stearic acid. MYRJ® surfactants are hydrophilic and soluble or dispersible in water, like TWEEN® surfactants. The MYRJ® surfactants may be blended, for example, with TWEEN® surfactants or with TWEEN®/SPAN® or with ARLACEL® surfactant mixtures for use in forming emulsions. MYRJ® surfactants can be made by methods known in the art or are available commercially from ICI America's Inc.

[0107] Another group of polyoxyethylene based non-ionic surfactants are the polyoxyethylene fatty acid ethers derived from lauryl, acetyl, stearyl and oleyl alcohols. These materials are typically prepared as above by addition of ethylene oxide to a fatty alcohol. The commercial name for these surfactants is BRIJ®. BRIJ® surfactants may be hydrophilic or lipophilic depending on the size of the polyoxyethylene moiety in the surfactant. While the preparation of these compounds is available from the art, they are also readily available from such commercial sources as ICI America's Inc.

[0108] Other non-ionic surfactants which may be used in the practice of this invention are, for example: polyoxyethylenes, polyol fatty acid esters, polyoxyethylene ethers, polyoxypropylene fatty ethers, bee's wax derivatives containing polyoxyethylene, polyoxyethylene lanolin derivatives, polyoxyethylene fatty glycerides, glycerol fatty acid esters or other polyoxyethylene acid alcohols or ether derivatives of long-chain fatty acids of 12-22 carbon atoms.

[0109] As noted above, in certain embodiments, two or more surfactants are combined in the immunogenic emulsion compositions of the present invention. For instance, the immunogenic emulsion compositions can comprise a hydrophilic emulsifying agent having an HLB value ranging from 1-9 and a lipophilic emulsifying agent having an HLB value ranging from 10-18. As a specific example, a sorbitan fatty acid ester can be combined with a polyoxyethylene sorbitan fatty acid ester (see Table 1 below, which lists several of these emulsifiers, along with their associated HLB values).

Emulsifier	HLB
Sorbitan trioleate (Span® 85)	1.8
Sorbitan tristearate (Span® 65)	2.1
Sorbitan sesquioleate (Arlacel® 83)	3.7
Sorbitan monooleate (Span® 80)	4.3
Sorbitan monostearate (Span® 60)	4.7
Sorbitan monopalmitate (Span® 40)	6.7
Sorbitan monolaurate (Span® 20)	8.6
Polyoxyethylene sorbitan tristearate (Tween® 65)	10.5
Polyoxyethylene sorbitan trioleate (Tween® 85)	11.0
Polysorbate 60 (Tween ®60)	14.9
Polysorbate 80 (Tween® 80)	15.0
Polysorbate 40 (Tween® 40)	15.6
Polysorbate 20 (Tween® 20)	16.7

Table 1.

[0110] Because the immunogenic emulsion compositions of the present invention are commonly intended for parenteral administration, the tonicity, i.e., osmolality, of the immunogenic compositions is typically compatible with normal physiological fluids in order to prevent post-administration swelling or rapid absorption of the composition due to, for example, differential solute concentrations between the composition and physiological fluids. Essentially any physiologically acceptable solute, for example, sodium chloride, can be used to adjust osmolality.

[0111] The emulsion compositions are also typically buffered in order to maintain pH compatible with normal physiological conditions. Also, in certain instances, it can be necessary to maintain the pH at a particular level in order to ensure the stability of certain composition components such as the glycopeptides. Any physiologically acceptable buffer can be used herein, such as phosphate buffers. Other acceptable buffers such acetate, Tris, bicarbonate, carbonate, or the like can be used as well. The pH of the aqueous component will typically be between about 6.0-8.0.

[0112] When the submicron emulsion is initially prepared unadulterated water is

typically used as the aqueous component of the emulsion, because, for example, increasing salt concentration can make it more difficult to achieve the desired small droplet size.

[0113] Once the emulsion is prepared, however, the tonicity and the pH can be properly adjusted, for example, by the addition of solute and/or appropriate buffer. In some embodiments, the antigen can be added in a buffer solution having an osmolality and pH appropriate to provide the desired osmolality and pH to the final immunogenic composition. Similarly, in some embodiments, the phospholipid can be dissolved or dispersed in a buffer solution having an appropriate osmolality and pH and added to the emulsion.

[0114] The immunogenic emulsion compositions of the present invention are prepared using any of several methods well known in the art. Preferably, the emulsion compositions of the present invention are in the form of oil-in-water emulsions with submicron oil droplets, i.e., emulsions with dispersed (oil) phase droplets less than about 1 micron in diameter and in the nanometer size range. In order to produce such emulsions, a number of techniques can be used. For example, commercial emulsifiers can be used, which operate by the principle of high shear forces developed by forcing fluids through small apertures under high pressure. Examples of commercial emulsifiers include, without limitation, Model 110Y microfluidizer (Microfluidics, Newton, Mass.), Gaulin Model 30CD (Gaulin, Inc., Everett, Mass.), and Rainnie Minilab Type 8.30H (Miro Atomizer Food and Dairy, Inc., Hudson, Wis.). The appropriate pressure for use with an individual emulsion is readily determined by one of skill in the art. Further information regarding metabolizable oil emulsions can be found, for example, in commonly owned International Publication No. WO 00/50006 and in U.S. Patent No. 6,299,884.

[0115] The size of the oil droplets can be varied, for example, by changing the ratio of emulsifying agent to oil (increasing the ratio typically decreases droplet size), operating pressure (increasing operating pressure typically decreases droplet size) and operating temperature (increasing temperature typically decreases droplet size). Droplet size will also vary with the particular emulsifying agent and oil used, as well as other components present, if any, at the time of emulsification (e.g., phospholipid, antigen, and optional supplemental compounds discussed below).

[0116] Droplet size can be verified by use of sizing instruments, such as the commercial Sub-Micron Particle Analyzer (Model N4MD) manufactured by the Coulter Corporation, and the method parameters can be varied, for example, using the guidelines set forth above until substantially all droplets are less than 1 micron in diameter, typically less than 0.8 microns in diameter, and more typically less than 0.5 microns in diameter. By “substantially all” is meant at least about 80% (by number), typically at least about 90%, more typically at least about 95% or even at least 98%. The particle size distribution is typically Gaussian, so that the average diameter is smaller than the stated limits.

[0117] According to one specific example, phospholipid, metabolizable oil, emulsifier having an HLB value ranging from 1-9 and, optionally, organic solvent are combined to provide an oil phase. Concurrently, emulsifier having an HLB value ranging from 10-18 is combined with water or another aqueous solution to provide an aqueous phase. The oil and aqueous phases are combined and subjected to a high-shear apparatus to create an emulsion containing dispersed (oil phase) particles of the desired size. The process is preferably completed by the removal of any residual organic solvent.

[0118] The antigen of interest can be provided within the immunogenic emulsion compositions of the present invention by a number of techniques. Typically, an emulsion is prepared from water, metabolizable oil, emulsifying agent and, optionally, phospholipid, as described above prior to adding the antigen that will be used in the vaccine. As noted, it may be desirable to initially prepare the emulsion using, for example, unadulterated water (e.g., deionized water), followed by the addition of the antigen within an appropriate buffer solution, to provide the final composition with the desired osmolality and pH. Since the emulsion compositions are typically stable, the antigen and emulsion can be mixed by simple shaking. Other techniques, such as passing the antigen and emulsion rapidly through a small opening (such as a hypodermic needle), can readily provide a useful vaccine composition. However, it is not necessarily essential that the antigen of interest be added after formation of the emulsion composition. Instead, the antigen can be added prior to emulsification as discussed above.

[0119] Various components, such as the phospholipid and/or the optional

supplemental components described below, can be introduced into the emulsion compositions of the present invention, for example, (a) if in oil-soluble or oil-dispersible form, by adding the additional component to the oil phase(s) or (b) if in water-soluble or water-dispersible form, by adding the additional component to the aqueous phase, either before or after emulsification.

4. Immunogenic Microparticle Compositions

[0120] Useful biodegradable polymers for forming the immunogenic microparticle compositions described herein include homopolymers, copolymers and polymer blends derived from the following: polyhydroxybutyric acid (also known as polyhydroxybutyrate); polyhydroxy valeric acid (also known as polyhydroxyvalerate); polyglycolic acid (PGA) (also known as polyglycolide); polylactic acid (PLA) (also known as polylactide); polydioxanone; polycaprolactone; polyorthoester; and polyanhydride. More typical are poly(α -hydroxy acids), such as poly(L-lactide), poly(D,L-lactide) (both known as "PLA" herein), poly(hydroxybutyrates), copolymers of lactide and glycolide, such as poly(D,L-lactide-co-glycolides) (designated as "PLG" herein) or copolymers of D,L-lactide and caprolactone.

[0121] The above polymers are available in a variety of molecular weights, and the appropriate molecular weight for a given use is readily determined by one of skill in the art. Thus, for example, a suitable molecular weight for PLA may be on the order of about 2000 to 5000. A suitable molecular weight for PLG may range from about 10,000 to about 200,000, typically about 15,000 to about 150,000.

[0122] Where copolymers are used, copolymers with a variety of monomer ratios may be available. For example, where PLG is used to form the microparticles, a variety of lactide:glycolide molar ratios will find use herein, and the ratio is largely a matter of choice, depending in part on any coadministered adsorbed and/or entrapped species and the rate of degradation desired. For example, a 50:50 PLG polymer, containing 50% D,L-lactide and 50% glycolide, will provide a fast resorbing copolymer while 75:25 PLG degrades more slowly, and 85:15 and 90:10, even more slowly, due to the increased lactide component. Mixtures of microparticles with varying lactide:glycolide ratios may also find use herein in order to achieve the desired release kinetics. Degradation rate of

the microparticles of the present invention can also be controlled by such factors as polymer molecular weight and polymer crystallinity.

[0123] PLG copolymers with varying lactide:glycolide ratios and molecular weights are readily available commercially from a number of sources including from Boehringer Ingelheim, Germany and Birmingham Polymers, Inc., Birmingham, AL. Some exemplary PLG copolymers include: (a) RG 502, a PLG having a 50:50 lactide/glycolide molar ratio and a molecular weight of 12,000 Da; (b) RG 503, a PLG having a 50:50 lactide/glycolide molar ratio and a molecular weight of 34,000 Da; (c) RG 504, a PLG having a 50:50 lactide/glycolide molar ratio and a molecular weight of 48,000 Da, (d) RG 752, a PLG having a 75:25 lactide/glycolide molar ratio and a molecular weight of 22,000 Da; and (e) RG 755, a PLG having a 75:25 lactide/glycolide molar ratio and a molecular weight of 68,000 Da. PLG polymers can also be synthesized by simple polycondensation of the lactic acid component using techniques well known in the art, such as described in Tabata et al., *J. Biomed. Mater. Res.* (1988) 22:837-858.

[0124] Where used, poly(D,L-lactide-co-glycolide) polymers are typically those having a molar lactide/glycolide molar ratio ranging from 20:80 to 80:20, more typically 40:60 to 60:40, and having a molecular weight ranging from 10,000 to 100,000 Daltons, more typically from 20,000 Daltons to 70,000 Daltons.

[0125] Microparticles are prepared using any of several methods well known in the art. For example, in some embodiments, double emulsion/solvent evaporation techniques, such as those described in U.S. Patent No. 3,523,907 and Ogawa et al., *Chem. Pharm. Bull.* (1988) 36:1095-1103, can be used herein to make the microparticles. These techniques involve the formation of a primary emulsion consisting of droplets of polymer solution, which is subsequently mixed with a continuous aqueous phase containing a particle stabilizer/surfactant.

[0126] In other embodiments, microparticles can also be formed using spray-drying and coacervation as described in, e.g., Thomasin et al., *J. Controlled Release* (1996) 41:131; U.S. Patent No. 2,800,457; Masters, K. (1976) *Spray Drying* 2nd Ed. Wiley, New York; air-suspension coating techniques, such as pan coating and Wurster coating, as described by Hall et al., (1980) The "Wurster Process" in *Controlled Release Technologies: Methods, Theory, and Applications* (A.F. Kydonieus, ed.), Vol. 2, pp. 133-154 CRC Press, Boca Raton, Florida and Deasy, P.B., *Crit. Rev. Ther. Drug Carrier Syst.*

(1988) S(2):99-139; and ionic gelation as described by, e.g., Lim et al., *Science* (1980) 210:908-910.

[0127] In preferred embodiments, a water-in-oil-in-water (w/o/w) solvent evaporation system can be used to form the microparticles, along the lines described by O'Hagan et al., *Vaccine* (1993) 11:965-969, PCT/US99/17308 (WO 00/06123) to O'Hagan et al. and Jeffery et al., *Pharm. Res.* (1993) 10:362.

[0128] In general, a polymer of interest such as PLG is dissolved in an organic solvent, such as ethyl acetate, dimethylchloride (also called methylene chloride and dichloromethane), acetonitrile, acetone, chloroform, and the like. The polymer will typically be provided in about a 1-30%, more typically about a 2-15%, even more typically about a 3-10% and most typically, about a 4-8% solution, in organic solvent. The polymer solution is then combined with a first volume of aqueous solution and emulsified to form an o/w emulsion. The aqueous solution can be, for example, deionized water, normal saline, a buffered solution, for example, phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) or a sodium citrate/ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (sodium citrate/ETDA) buffer solution. The latter solutions can (a) provide a tonicity, i.e., osmolality, that is essentially the same as normal physiological fluids and (b) maintain a pH compatible with normal physiological conditions. Alternatively, the tonicity and/or pH characteristics of the compositions of the present invention can be adjusted after microparticle formation and prior to administration. Preferably, the volume ratio of polymer solution to aqueous solution ranges from about 5:1 to about 20:1, more preferably about 10:1. Emulsification is conducted using any equipment appropriate for this task, and is typically a high-shear device such as, e.g., a homogenizer.

[0129] In some embodiments, one or more additional components are entrapped within the microparticles. For example, antigen, phospholipid and/or the optional supplemental components described below can be introduced by adding the same (a) to the polymer solution, if in oil-soluble or oil-dispersible form or (b) to the aqueous solution, if in water-soluble or water-dispersible form.

[0130] A volume of the o/w emulsion is then combined with a larger second volume of an aqueous solution, which typically contains a surfactant. The volume ratio of aqueous solution to o/w emulsion typically ranges from about 2:1 to 10:1, more typically about 4:1. Examples of surfactants appropriate for the practice of the invention are listed

above. Those of ordinary skill in the art may readily select surfactants appropriate for the type of species to be adsorbed. For example, microparticles manufactured in the presence of charged surfactants, such as anionic or cationic surfactants, may yield microparticles with a surface having a net negative or a net positive charge, which can adsorb a wide variety of molecules. For example, microparticles manufactured with anionic surfactants, such as sodium dodecyl sulfate (SDS), e.g., SDS-PLG microparticles, adsorb positively charged species, for example, polypeptide-containing species such as proteins. Similarly, microparticles manufactured with cationic surfactants, such as CTAB, e.g., PLG/CTAB microparticles, adsorb negatively charged species, for example, polynucleotide-containing species such as DNA. Where the species to be adsorbed have regions of positive and negative charge, either cationic or anionic or nonionic surfactants may be appropriate. Certain species may adsorb more readily to microparticles having a combination of surfactants. Moreover, in some instances, it may be desirable to add surfactant to the above organic solution.

[0131] Where a cationic surfactant such as CTAB is used, it is typically provided in about a 0.00025-1% solution, more typically about a 0.0025-0.1% solution. Where an anionic surfactant such as DSS is used, it is typically provided in about a 0.00001-.025% solution, more typically about a 0.0001-0.0025% solution. Where a nonionic surfactant such as PVA is used, it is typically provided in about a 2-15% solution, more typically about a 4-10% solution. For a cationic surfactant, a weight-to-weight surfactant-to-polymer ratio in the range of from about 0.00001:1 to about 0.5:1 is typically used; more typically from about 0.001:1 to about 0.1:1, and even more typically from about 0.0025:1 to about 0.05:1; for an anionic surfactant such as DSS, a weight-to-weight surfactant-to-polymer ratio in the range of from about 0.00001:1 to about 0.025:1 is typically used, more typically from about 0.0001:1 to about 0.0025:1; for a nonionic surfactant such as PVA a weight-to-weight surfactant-to-polymer ratio in the range of from about 0.001:1 to about 0.1:1 is typically used, more typically from about 0.0025:1 to about 0.05:1 is used.

[0132] This mixture is then homogenized to produce a stable w/o/w double emulsion. Each of the above homogenization steps is typically conducted at a room temperature (i.e., 25°C) or less, more typically less, for example, while cooling within an ice bath.

[0133] Organic solvents are then evaporated. Following preparation, microparticles

can be used as is or lyophilized for future use.

[0134] The formulation parameters can be manipulated to allow the preparation of small microparticles on the order of 0.05 μm (50 nm) to larger microparticles 50 μm or even larger. See, e.g., Jeffery et al., *Pharm. Res.* (1993) 10:362-368; McGee et al., *J. Microencap.* (1996). For example, reduced agitation typically results in larger microparticles, as do an increase in internal phase volume and an increase in polymer concentration. Small particles are typically produced by increased agitation as well as low aqueous phase volumes, high concentrations of emulsion stabilizers and a decrease in polymer concentration.

[0135] Particle size can be determined by, e.g., laser light scattering, using for example, a spectrometer incorporating a helium-neon laser. Generally, particle size is determined at room temperature and involves multiple analyses of the sample in question (e.g., 5-10 times) to yield an average value for the particle diameter. Particle size is also readily determined using scanning electron microscopy (SEM).

[0136] Upon preparation, a variety of components can be admixed with the microparticles, including antigen, phospholipid, and optional supplemental components such as those described below, and the resulting formulation can be lyophilized prior to use if desired. Typically, these components are added to the microparticles as an aqueous solution or dispersion. In some instances, these species will become adsorbed to the surface of the microparticles (see, e.g., the Examples below in which polypeptide antigens are adsorbed to the microparticle surface). The content of the adsorbed species can be determined using standard techniques.

[0137] Thus, the polymer microparticles of the present invention may have a variety of components entrapped or encapsulated within them, as well as having a variety of components adsorbed thereon. For example, one of ordinary skill in the art may prepare in accordance with the invention microparticles having adsorbed components, in addition to adsorbed antigen. One of ordinary skill in the art may also prepare in accordance with the invention microparticles having encapsulated components, such as antigen, phospholipid and/or any of the supplemental components described below.

5. Supplemental Components

[0138] The immunogenic compositions of the present invention can include a wide

variety of optional supplemental components. Such supplemental components include: (a) pharmaceuticals such as antibiotics and antiviral agents, nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs, analgesics, vasodilators, cardiovascular drugs, psychotropics, neuroleptics, antidepressants, antiparkinson drugs, beta blockers, calcium channel blockers, bradykinin inhibitors, ACE-inhibitors, vasodilators, prolactin inhibitors, steroids, hormone antagonists, antihistamines, serotonin antagonists, heparin, chemotherapeutic agents, antineoplastics and growth factors, including but not limited to PDGF, EGF, KGF, IGF-1 and IGF-2, FGF, (b) hormones including peptide hormones such as insulin, proinsulin, growth hormone, GHRH, LHRH, EGF, somatostatin, SNX-111, BNP, insulinotropin, ANP, FSH, LH, PSH and hCG, gonadal steroid hormones (androgens, estrogens and progesterone), thyroid-stimulating hormone, inhibin, cholecystokinin, ACTH, CRF, dynorphins, endorphins, endothelin, fibronectin fragments, galanin, gastrin, insulinotropin, glucagon, GTP-binding protein fragments, guanylin, the leukokinins, magainin, mastoparans, dermaseptin, systemin, neuromedins, neurotensin, pancreastatin, pancreatic polypeptide, substance P, secretin, thymosin, and the like, (c) enzymes, (d) transcription or translation mediators, (e) intermediates in metabolic pathways, (f) immunomodulators, such as any of the various cytokines including interleukin-1, interleukin-2, interleukin-3, interleukin-4, and gamma-interferon, and (g) supplementary immunological adjuvants such as those described below.

[0139] In the case of immunogenic microparticle compositions, such supplemental components can be, for example, adsorbed on the surface of the microparticles, entrapped within the microparticles, dissolved or dispersed in solution while unbound to the microparticles, adsorbed to or entrapped within another group of microparticles, and so forth.

[0140] In the case of immunogenic emulsion compositions, such supplemental components can be, for example, dissolved or dispersed within the oil phase(s) of the emulsion, dissolved or dispersed within the aqueous phase of the emulsion, disposed at the interface between the aqueous and oil phases of the emulsion, and so forth.

[0141] Supplementary immunological adjuvants may be used to enhance the effectiveness of the immunogenic compositions. For example, such immunological adjuvants may be administered concurrently with the immunogenic compositions of the present invention, e.g., in the same composition or in separate compositions.

Alternatively, such adjuvants may be administered prior or subsequent to the immunogenic compositions of the present invention.

[0142] Supplementary immunological adjuvants include, but are not limited to: (1) aluminum salts (alum), such as aluminum hydroxide, aluminum phosphate, aluminum sulfate, etc.; (2) saponin adjuvants, such as Quil A, or QS21 (e.g., Stimulon™ (Cambridge Bioscience, Worcester, MA)) may be used or particles generated therefrom such as ISCOMs (immunostimulating complexes), which ICOMS may be devoid of additional detergent e.g., WO00/07621; (3) Complete Freund's Adjuvant (CFA) and Incomplete Freund's Adjuvant (IFA); (4) cytokines, such as interleukins (e.g. IL-1, IL-2, IL-4, IL-5, IL-6, IL-7, IL-12 (WO99/44636), etc.), interferons (e.g. gamma interferon), macrophage colony stimulating factor (M-CSF), tumor necrosis factor (TNF), etc.; (5) oligonucleotides comprising CpG motifs (Roman et al., *Nat. Med.*, 1997, 3, 849-854; Weiner et al., *PNAS USA*, 1997, 94, 10833-10837; Davis et al., *J. Immunol.* 1988, 160, 870-876; Chu et al., *J. Exp. Med.*, 1997, 186, 1623-1631; Lipford et al., *Eur. J. Immunol.* 1997, 27, 2340-2344; Moldoveanu et al., *Vaccine*, 1988, 16, 1216-1224, Krieg et al., *Nature*, 1995, 374, 546-549; Klinman et al., *PNAS USA*, 1996, 93, 2879-2883; Ballas et al., *J. Immunol.*, 1996, 157, 1840-1845; Cowdery et al., *J. Immunol.*, 1996, 156, 4570-4575; Halpern et al., *Cell. Immunol.*, 1996, 167, 72-78; Yamamoto et al., *Jpn. J. Cancer Res.*, 1988, 79, 866-873; Stacey et al., *J. Immunol.*, 1996, 157, 2116-2122; Messina et al., *J. Immunol.*, 1991, 147, 1759-1764; Yi et al., *J. Immunol.*, 1996, 157, 4918-4925; Yi et al., *J. Immunol.*, 1996, 157, 5394-5402; Yi et al., *J. Immunol.*, 1998, 160, 4755-4761; and Yi et al., *J. Immunol.*, 1998, 160, 5898-5906; International patent applications WO96/02555, WO98/16247, WO98/18810, WO98/40100, WO98/55495, WO98/37919 and WO98/52581), i.e. oligonucleotides containing at least one CG dinucleotide (a cytosine nucleotide followed by a guanosine nucleotide), with 5 methylcytosine optionally being used in place of cytosine; (6) a polyoxyethylene ether or a polyoxyethylene ester e.g. WO99/52549; (7) a polyoxyethylene sorbitan ester surfactant in combination with an octoxynol (WO01/21207) or a polyoxyethylene alkyl ether or ester surfactant in combination with at least one additional non-ionic surfactant such as an octoxynol (WO01/21152); (8) a saponin and an immunostimulatory oligonucleotide (e.g., a CpG oligonucleotide) (WO00/62800); (9) an immunostimulant and a particle of metal salt e.g. WO00/23105; (10) a saponin and an oil-in-water emulsion, e.g., WO99/11241;

(11) a saponin (e.g. QS21) + 3dMPL + IL-12 (optionally + a sterol), e.g., WO98/57659; (12) detoxified mutants of a bacterial ADP-ribosylating toxin such as a cholera toxin (CT), a pertussis toxin (PT), or an *E. coli* heat-labile toxin (LT), particularly LT-K63 (where lysine is substituted for the wild-type amino acid at position 63), LT-R72 (where arginine is substituted for the wild-type amino acid at position 72), CT-S109 (where serine is substituted for the wild-type amino acid at position 109), and PT-K9/G129 (where lysine is substituted for the wild-type amino acid at position 9 and glycine substituted at position 129) (see, e.g., International Publication Nos. W093/13202 and W092/19265); (13) adjuvants comprising natural or synthetic double-stranded RNA ("dsRNA"), which is generally made up of intermittent riboguanlylic acid-ribocytidylic acid ([rG-rC]) and riboadenylic acid-polribouridylic acid ([rA-rU]) base pairs; for further information see, e.g., commonly owned PCT/US02/30423.; and (14) other substances that act as immunostimulating agents to enhance the effectiveness of the composition.

[0143] Muramyl peptides include, but are not limited to, N-acetyl-muramyl-L-threonyl-D-isoglutamine (thr-MDP), N-acetyl-normuramyl-L-alanyl-D-isoglutamine (nor-MDP), N-acetylmuramyl-L-alanyl-D-isoglutaminyl-L-alanine-2-(1'-2'-dipalmitoyl-sn-glycero-3-hydroxyphosphoryloxy)-ethylamine (MTP-PE), etc.

[0144] For additional examples of adjuvants, see *Vaccine Design, The Subunit and the Adjuvant Approach*, Powell, M.F. and Newman, M.J, eds., Plenum Press, 1995).

6. Administration

[0145] Once formulated, the compositions of the invention can be administered parenterally, e.g., by injection (which may be needleless). The compositions can be injected subcutaneously, intraperitoneally, intravenously, intraarterially, intradermally, or intramuscularly, for example. Other modes of administration include nasal, mucosal, intraocular, rectal, vaginal, oral and pulmonary administration, suppositories, and transdermal or transcutaneous applications.

[0146] In some embodiments, the compositions of the present invention can be used for site-specific targeted delivery. For example, intravenous administration of the compositions can be used for targeting the lung, liver, spleen, blood circulation, or bone marrow.

[0147] As can be seen from the above, the compositions of the present invention will

generally include one or more pharmaceutically acceptable excipients. For example, vehicles such as water, saline, glycerol, polyethylene glycol, hyaluronic acid, ethanol, etc. may be used. Other excipients, such as wetting or emulsifying agents, biological buffering substances, and the like, may be present. A biological buffer can be virtually any solution which is pharmacologically acceptable and which provides the formulation with the desired pH, i.e., a pH in the physiological range. Examples include saline, phosphate buffered saline, Tris buffered saline, Hank's buffered saline, and the like. Depending on the final dosage form, other excipients known in the art can also be introduced, including binders, disintegrants, fillers (diluents), lubricants, glidants (flow enhancers), compression aids, colors, sweeteners, preservatives, suspending/dispersing agents, film formers/coatings, flavors and printing inks.

[0148] Treatment may be conducted according to a single dose schedule or a multiple dose schedule. A multiple dose schedule is one in which a primary course of administration may be given, for example, with 1-10 separate doses, followed by other doses given at subsequent time intervals, chosen to maintain and/or reinforce the therapeutic response, for example at 1-4 months for a second dose, and if needed, a subsequent dose(s) after several months. The dosage regimen will also be, at least in part, determined by the need of the subject and be dependent on the judgment of the practitioner.

[0149] Furthermore, if prevention of disease is desired, the compositions are generally administered prior to the arrival of the primary occurrence of the infection or disorder of interest. If other forms of treatment are desired, e.g., the reduction or elimination of symptoms or recurrences, the compositions are generally administered subsequent to the arrival of the primary occurrence of the infection or disorder of interest.

C. Experimental

[0150] Below are examples of specific embodiments for carrying out the present invention. The examples are offered for illustrative purposes only, and are not intended to limit the scope of the present invention in any way.

[0151] Efforts have been made to ensure accuracy with respect to numbers used (e.g., amounts, temperatures, etc.), but some experimental error and deviation should, of course, be allowed for.

Example 1

Preparation and Characterization of Blank PLG Microparticles

[0152] Microparticles were prepared using a 6% w/v solution of RG504 polymer (a PLG Polymer having a 50:50 lactide/glycolide molar ratio and a molecular weight of 42-45 kDaltons, available from Boehringer Ingelheim) in methylene chloride. 10 ml of this solution was homogenized with 2.5ml PBS using a 10-mm probe of a homogenizer (Ultra-Turrax T25 IKA-Labortechnik, Germany) for three minutes at 15,000 rpm, thereby forming a water-in-oil emulsion. This emulsion was then added to 50 ml of distilled water containing 6ug/ml dioctyl sodium sulfosuccinate (DSS)(available from Sigma, USA) and homogenized at very high speed using a homogenizer with a 20-mm probe (ES-15 Omni International, GA, USA) for 25 minutes in an ice bath. This resulted in water-in-oil-in-water emulsion, which was stirred at 1000rpm for 12 h at room temperature, allowing the methylene chloride to evaporate. The resulting microparticles were freeze dried. The resulting microparticles contained 0.05% DSS wt/wt. The size distribution of the resulting microparticles was determined using a particle size analyzer (Master Sizer, Malvern Instruments, UK), and was found to be between 0.8 and 1.2 μm .

Example 2

Preparation and Characterization of

PLG Microparticles with Entrapped Eisai 57 or Eisai 53

[0153] Microparticles were prepared by homogenizing 10ml of 6% w/v of solution of RG504 PLG polymer in methylene chloride to which has been added either (a) 3 mg of Eisai57 (ER-804057, Eisai Co., Ltd., Tokyo, JP) phospholipid in a chloroform suspension or (b) 3 mg Eisai 53 (ER-804053, Eisai Co., Ltd., Tokyo, JP) phospholipid in an ethanol suspension, with 2.5ml PBS using a 10-mm probe (Ultra-Turrax T25 IKA-Labortechnik, Germany) for three minutes at 15,000 rpm thus forming water-in-oil emulsions. Each of these emulsions was then added to 50ml of distilled water containing 6 ug/ml DSS and homogenized at very high speed using a homogenizer with a 20-mm probe (ES-15 Omni International, GA, USA) for 25 minutes in an ice bath. This resulted in water-in-oil-in-water emulsions, which were stirred at 1000rpm for 12 h at room temperature, while the methylene chloride was allowed to evaporate. The resulting microparticles were freeze-

dried. The resulting microparticles contained 0.05% DSS wt/wt. The size distribution of the resulting microparticles was determined using a particle size analyzer (Master Sizer, Malvern Instruments, UK) and was found to be between 0.8 and 1.2 μm .

Example 3

Preparation of Injectable Compositions

[0154] 10 mg (i.e., 10 ml of a 10mg/ml suspension) of the DSS particles from Example 1 were incubated overnight at room temperature with 1 mg of meningitis B antigen ("MenB") (see, e.g., PCT/IB02/03904; WO 01/52885; Vol. 287 *Science*, 1816 (2000)) in 1 ml of histidine buffer (10 mmol, pH 5.0). The suspension was lyophilized after the addition of excipient (mannitol:sucrose, 45:15 mg/ml).

[0155] These compositions were (a) after reconstitution in water for injection, injected intramuscularly into mice ("PLG/MenB"), (b) combined with 0.1 ml of a solution containing 1.0 mg/ml CpG oligonucleotide (available from Oligos Inc., USA) in T.E. buffer ("PLG/MenB + sol CPG") and injected, (c) combined with 0.1 ml of a solution containing 1.0 mg/ml ER-804053 in ethanol ("PLG/MenB + sol Eisai53") and injected, (d) combined with 0.1 ml of a solution containing 1.0 mg/ml ER-804057 in ethanol ("PLG/MenB + sol Eisai57") and injected, (e) combined with 10 mg of lyophilized DSS particles with entrapped ER-804053 from Example 2 ("PLG/MenB + PLG/Eisai53") and injected, or (f) combined with 10 mg of lyophilized DSS particles with entrapped ER-804057 from Example 2 ("PLG/MenB + PLG/Eisai57") and injected.

[0156] Also, 100 mg lyophilized DSS particles with entrapped phospholipid from Example 2 were incubated overnight at room temperature with 1.0 mg of meningitis B antigen in 1 ml histidine buffer (pH 5.0). Each of these compositions (referred to herein as "PLG/Eisai53/MenB" or "PLG/Eisai57/MenB") was directly injected intramuscularly into mice.

[0157] In each of the above cases, the mice are boosted at 21 days and 35 days.

Example 4

Preparation and Characterization of MF59 Emulsion

[0158] 500µl of chloroform were placed in a 50ml beaker, and 100µl Span® 85 (available from Sigma, USA) and 1ml squalene (available from Sigma, USA) were added and mixed. 100µl Tween® 80 (from Sigma, USA) was added to 18.8ml D.I. water and mixed by stirring for 15min. The Tween® solution was added to the oil mixture and homogenized with a 10mm probe (Ultra-Turrax T25 IKA-Labortechnik, Germany), for 1min. The emulsified mixture was passed through a micro fluidizer (model M1105 from Microfluidics) at 90 psi 5 times. The residual chloroform was allowed to evaporate for 30min. Emulsions are analyzed for size by dynamic light scattering yielding a <200 nm size distribution.

Example 5

Preparation and Characterization of Eisai57 and Eisai53 MF59 Emulsions

[0159] Oil-in-water emulsions were prepared with Eisai 57 or Eisai53 incorporated into the oil phase. Briefly, 800µl of 5mg/ml Eisai57 in chloroform and 800µl of 5mg/ml Eisai53 in chloroform were placed in separate 50ml beakers. The chloroform was allowed to evaporate down to a volume of about 500µl in each. 100µl Span® 85 and 1ml squalene were added to each and mixed. 100µl Tween® 80 was added to 18.8ml D.I. water and mixed by stirring for 15min. The Tween® solution was added to each oil mixture and homogenized with a 10mm probe (Ultra-Turrax T25 IKA-Labortechnik, Germany) for 1min. Each emulsified mixture was passed through a micro fluidizer at 90 psi 5 times. Emulsions were analyzed for size by dynamic light scattering yielding a <200 nm size distribution.

Example 6

Preparation of Injectable Compositions

[0160] To 0.5 ml of each of the emulsions formed in Examples 4 and 5 was added 0.5 ml of a solution containing 0.2 mg/ml of antigen in PBS and the resulting compositions were mixed for 5 minutes. Antigens used were as follows: (a) meningitis B

antigen, with the resulting injectable compositions referred to herein as “MF59 + sol MenB”, “MF59/Eisai53 + sol MenB” and “MF59/Eisai57 + sol MenB”; (b) HIV gp120 envelope protein (see, e.g., WO 00/06123; WO 02/26209), with the resulting injectable compositions referred to herein as “MF59 + sol gp120”, “MF59/Eisai53 + sol gp120” and “MF59/Eisai57 + sol gp120”; (c) HCV E1E2 polypeptide (see, e.g., PCT/US02/20676), with the resulting injectable compositions referred to herein as “MF59 + sol E1E2”, “MF59/Eisai53 + sol E1E2” and “MF59/Eisai57 + sol E1E2”.

[0161] To 0.5 ml of the emulsion formed in Example 4 was added (a) 0.5 ml of a solution containing 0.1 mg/ml of CpG oligonucleotide in PBS and (b) 0.5 ml of a solution containing 0.2 mg/ml of antigen in PBS. The resulting compositions were mixed for 5 minutes. Antigens used were as follows: (a) meningitis B protein (“MF59 + sol MenB + sol CpG”); (b) HIV gp120 envelope protein (“MF59 + sol gp120 + sol CpG”); (c) HCV E1E2 polypeptide (“MF59 + sol E1E2 + sol CpG”).

[0162] Each of these compositions was directly injected intramuscularly into mice. In each case, the mice are boosted at 21 days and 35 days.

Example 7

In Vivo Evaluation

Antibody assays

[0163] Antigen-specific antibodies IgG and IgG isotypes (IgG1 and IgG2a) were determined by ELISA using 3,3',5,5'-tetramethylbenzidine-based colorimetric detection. ELISA plates (Nunc Maxisorb U96) were coated with 50 µl of the purified antigen at 5 µg/ml overnight at 4 °C. The coated wells were blocked for 1 hr at 37 °C with 150 µl of 5 % goat serum (Gibco BRL, Grand Island, NY) in phosphate-buffered saline (PBS). The plates were washed three times with a washing buffer (PBS, 0.3% Tween-20), tapped, and dried. Serum samples and a serum standard were initially diluted in the blocking buffer and then transferred into coated, blocked plates in which the samples were serially diluted three-fold with the same buffer. Plates were washed after 1-hour incubation at 37°C. Horseradish peroxidase conjugated goat anti-mouse IgG gamma chain specific (Caltag Laboratories, Inc.) was used to determine the total IgG, and anti-mouse IgG1 and IgG2a were used to determine the isotypes. After the 1-hour incubation at 37°C, plates were washed to remove unbound antibodies. TMB substrate was used to develop the

plates, and the color reaction was blocked after 15 minutes by the addition of 2N HCL. The titers of the antibodies were expressed as the reciprocal of the sample dilution, in which the optical density of the diluted sample equaled 0.5 at 450nm. Results follow in Tables 2 and 3A-3C.

Formulation	Total IgG
PLG/MenB	8245
PLG/MenB + sol CPG	14402
PLG/MenB + sol Eisai53	43382
PLG/MenB + sol Eisai57	72901
PLG/MenB + PLG/Eisai53	35964
PLG/MenB + PLG/Eisai57	34526
PLG/Eisai53/MenB	36310
PLG/Eisai57/MenB	44656

Table 2. GMT titers two weeks post 3rd immunization.

Formulation	Total IgG	IgG2a	Ratio: (IgG2a)/ (MF59+sol MenB)
MF59 + sol MenB	46325	2530	1
MF59 + sol MenB + sol CpG	33985	5815	2.30
MF59/Eisai53 + sol MenB	98501	24508	9.69
MF59/Eisai57 + sol MenB	78366	19691	7.78

Table 3A. GMT titers three weeks post 3rd immunization.

Formulation	Total IgG	IgG2a	Ratio: (IgG2a)/ (MF59+sol gp120)
MF59 + sol gp120	764	25	1
MF59 + sol gp120 + sol CpG	5285	1753	70.12
MF59/Eisai53 + sol gp120	5062	1941	77.64
MF59/Eisai57 + sol gp120	13307	15618	624.7

Table 3B. GMT titers three weeks post 3rd immunization.

Formulation	Total IgG	IgG2a	Ratio: (IgG2a)/ (MF59+sol E1E2)
MF59 + sol E1E2	1090	2	1
MF59 + sol E1E2 + sol CpG	201	69	34
MF59/Eisai53 + sol E1E2	774	256	128
MF59/Eisai57 + sol E1E2	1205	562	281

Table 3C. GMT titers three weeks post 3rd immunization.

[0164] Although preferred embodiments of the subject invention have been described in some detail, it is understood that obvious variations can be made without departing from the spirit and the scope of the invention.